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TACTICAL STUDIES  
FROM  
THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR  
OF 1870-71

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BOOK  
TACTICAL STUDIES  
FROM  
THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR  
OF 1870-71

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## INTRODUCTION.

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IN bringing this work before the public, my object has been to provide a strictly accurate and impartial account of some of the most important battles of the Franco-German war of 1870-71, clearly arranged for the student of Military Art in the tactical branch.

The battles treated of are—Spicheren, Woerth, Mars-la-Tour, Gravelotte, and Sedan. The selection has been made with a view to bringing prominently forward the conduct of great battles in modern times, under conditions which are in each case illustrative of the application of tactical principles, to almost every conceivable situation in which a General or Staff Officer is likely to find himself placed.

I have visited each of these battle-fields two or three times, carefully studying the tactics of each battle upon the ground where it was fought, by which means alone can a thoroughly comprehensive knowledge of any battle be obtained.

The study of these interesting battles requires, however, such a vast amount of reading, that few are either able or willing to devote sufficient time to it; moreover, few, who are not in the habit of studying Military Art

somewhat closely, are able to read through several hundred pages of detailed descriptions, such as are to be found in the German official account, and carry away a clear idea of the sequence of events which go to make up a modern battle.

I have endeavoured in the following pages to present the subject in a clear and concise form—Narrative, Summary, and Comments; each battle being treated as a separate whole, complete in itself. In order to give the reader an intelligent appreciation of the events of the campaign as a whole, I have thought it desirable to preface the tactical portion of the work with a brief diary of the movements of the three German Armies from day to day, during the period embraced by the battles which have been selected as studies: *i.e.* from the morning of the 7th of August to the 18th of August, for the First and Second Armies; and from the morning of the 7th of August to the eve of Sedan, for the Third Army. This arrangement will, I trust, be found acceptable to the general reader anxious to acquire a sound knowledge of the subject. The comments are, generally speaking, indications of the line of thought into which it is desired to lead the reader, and are in no case exhaustive or controversial. I have made a point of avoiding the padding of the narrative with extraneous matter, such as is almost invariably to be found in popular accounts, and which, though interesting by reason of the stirring incidents treated of—the brave deeds of gallant men and noble instances of patriotism and self-sacrifice—still must inevitably distract the attention from the subject-matter proper, and seriously

impair the continuity of a narrative containing in itself ample food for thought, provided that it be studied with the close attention which it merits.

At the same time, the object which I have steadily kept in view throughout these pages has been to make them valuable to the purely military reader; in fact, to place before him, in the most condensed form possible, a mass of reading and accumulated experience, acquired by long and careful study of the subject under favourable conditions, no pains having been spared to render this work a reliable and valuable source of information to the student of Military Art.

The works principally consulted are :—

“German Official Account of the War of 1870–71,” translated by Major Clarke, R.A., and obtainable in sections.

“Bazaine et la Capitulation de Metz.”

“Notice sur les armes employées dans la campagne de 1870–71.”

“Campaign of August, 1870,” *Edinburgh Review*, July—October, 1870.

“Studies of the Recent War,” *Edinburgh Review*, January—April, 1871.

“Guerre Franco-Allemande: résumé et commentaires,” Captain Félix Bonnet.

“The Franco-German War to the fall of Strasbourg,” Borbstaedt and Dwyer.

The student who is desirous of a wider field for his reading, will do well to peruse some or all of these works.

In every case where any of the above accounts are conflicting, I have adopted the version given by the

“German official account,” as being the most reliable ; and all the maps and sketches in the following pages have either been carefully copied from that work, or, when no such maps or sketches existed in the “official account,” they have been compiled from the best available sources, and carefully compared with the letter-press of the German work, corrections and additions being made accordingly as required.

In conclusion, I would only say that if any of my brother-officers or others should be led, by a perusal of these pages, to wish to make a more practical acquaintance with the battle-fields therein treated of, I shall be happy to supply them with all the information at my command, as to the best method of setting about it ; or would refer them to a paper, contributed by me to the “Proceedings” of the Royal Artillery Institution, No. 4, vol. xii., in which they will find full particulars on the subject.

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*January 21, 1886.*

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# TACTICAL STUDIES

FROM THE

## FRANCO-GERMAN WAR OF 1870-71.

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DIARY OF THE WAR, FROM THE 6TH OF  
AUGUST TO THE FALL OF SEDAN.

*Retreat of MacMahon, and advance of the Crown  
Prince's Army after Woerth.\**

AFTER the complete defeat sustained by the French at Woerth, the greater part of MacMahon's army retreated by Bouxwiller to Sarrebourg, a smaller portion, which had formed the right wing, fled in utter disorder to Hagenau, and a fraction fled to Bitsch ; these last were rallied by General de Failly, and succeeded in reaching Sarrebourg by the evening of the 8th, by which time the Germans had completely lost touch of the fugitives.

The Third German Army, after its severe exertions August 7. on the day of Woerth, rested during the 7th in the vicinity of the battle-field ; the following movements only being undertaken. The Second Bavarian Corps concentrated at Niederbronn ; the Second Bavarian

\* For the composition and strength, etc., of the opposing forces, see Appendix.

Division advanced from Preuschkdorf to Oberbronn; the Baden Division occupied Hagenau.

The German cavalry had been obliged to discontinue the pursuit at the entrance of the Vosges passes.

It was believed that MacMahon had retreated by Bitsch, and the arrangements for the German advance were based on this presumption.

MacMahon's retreat.

The marshal, however, continued his retreat west-south-west to the upper valley of the Marne; he crossed the Moselle at Bayon on the 11th of August, and the Meuse at Neufchâteau, on the 14th of August. On the 15th he halted, and on the 16th commenced the transport by rail at Manois. By the evening of the 19th of August the whole corps were assembled at Chalons.

De Failly's retreat.

Meanwhile De Failly had been receiving orders direct from head-quarters. On arriving at Charmes, he received orders to march upon Toul, with the ultimate object of advancing to Metz or Chalons, as circumstances might dictate. After commencing the movement upon Toul, on the 12th, he received fresh orders to march on Paris, and in accordance with these instructions reached Chamont on the 16th. On the 17th he was again placed under the orders of MacMahon, and proceeded to Chalons, which place he reached on the 20th and 21st of August.

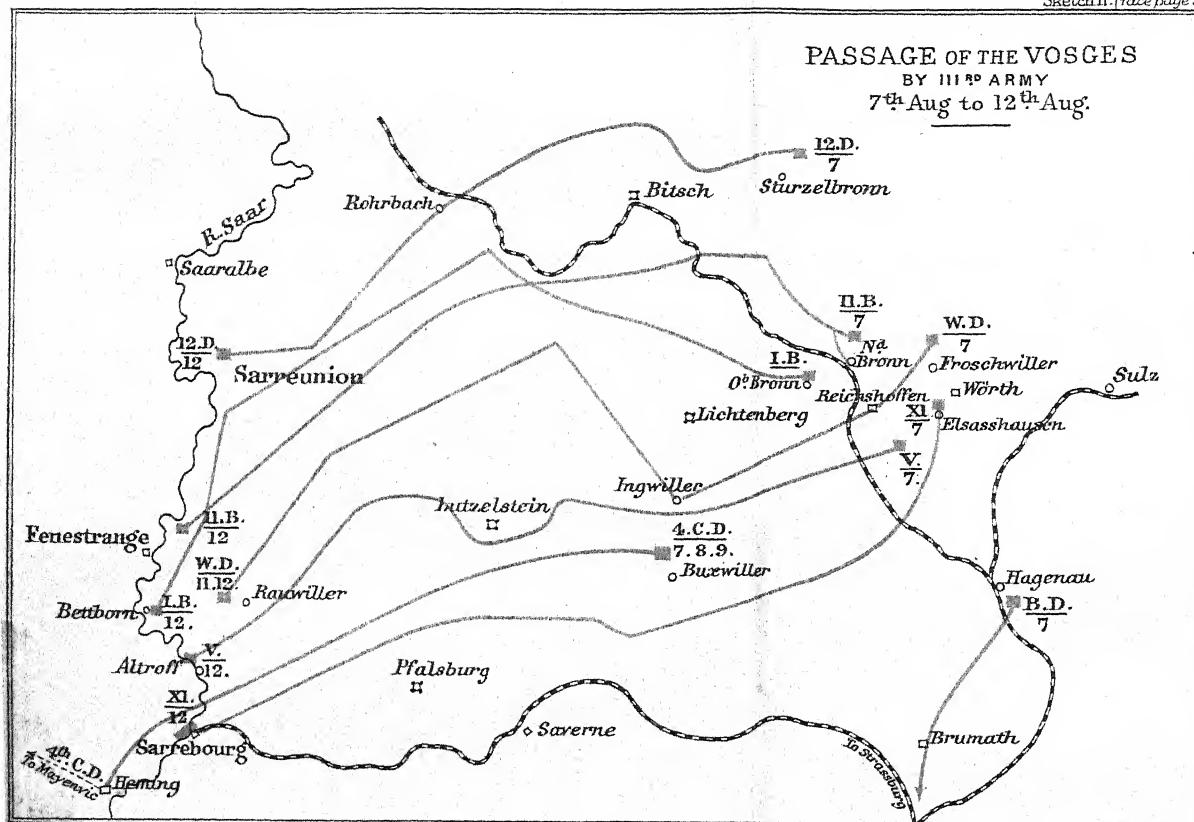
### *Advance of Third Army.*

German advance through the passes of the Vosges.

On the 8th of August the Third Army moved off on a broad front towards the Vosges. The two Bavarian Corps formed the right; the two Prussian Corps the left; while the Wurtemberg Division marched in the centre, forming the advance guard of the Prussian Fifth Corps, so long as the direction of the march permitted. The Twelfth Division of the Sixth Corps formed the right



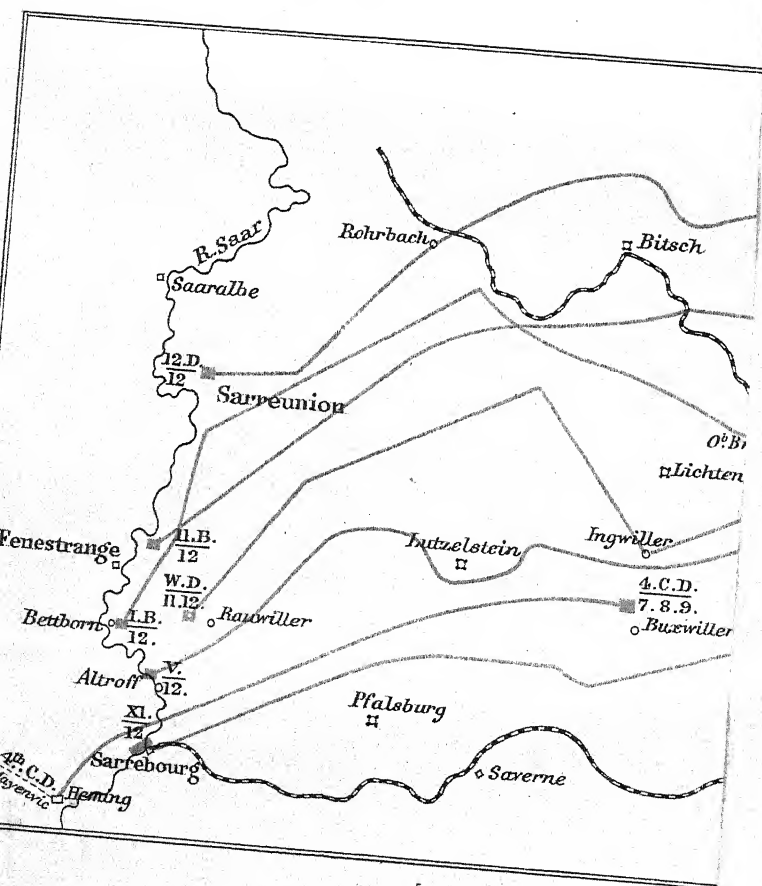
Sketch II. (face page 3.)



London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.

Edw. Waller, lith.





London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.

wing: in its advance from Sturzelbronn, it was to give support to the Fourth Corps, in the event of the latter being engaged at Rohrbach; otherwise it was to follow the Second Bavarian Corps to Saarunion. The troops received three days' *iron*\* rations; the trains of the various corps were to remain two days, march in rear, and not to enter the passes until they had been traversed by the troops. The marching columns were ordered to maintain communication, and afford mutual support in the event of any of them becoming engaged.†

Rations.  
Trains.

Communi-  
cations.

The Eleventh Division and Second Cavalry Division were meanwhile assembling at Sulz and Hagenau; their transport by rail was not completed until the 11th of August.

Eleventh  
Division  
and  
Second  
Cavalry  
Division.

The Baden Division reached Brumath on the 8th of August, and remained there watching Strasburg.

Baden  
Division.

The Crown Prince's army now commenced the passage of the Vosges, according to orders, on a front of twenty-four miles, prepared for all eventualities. (See Sketch 2.)

Passage of  
the  
Vosges.

The fortress of Bitsch resisted all attempts on the part of the German Army, compelling the troops on that road to move round by indifferent by-ways. The fortress was finally invested, and the by-roads improved. The use of the main road was forbidden by the fortress throughout the operations, and was not taken until the end of the war.

Fortress of  
Bitsch.

Lichtenberg was of less importance, and capitulated on the 9th of August, after one day's fighting.

Fortress of  
Lichten-  
berg.

\* *Iron* rations consist of tinned meat, soup, and biscuit, and are only to be opened in case of commissariat or local supplies not being obtainable.

† The orders of the Crown Prince for the passage of the Vosges, may be studied in detail with advantage. See German official account of the war.

Fortress of Lutzels-stein. The fortress of Lutzelsstein was undefended, and offered no obstacle to the passage of the troops.

Fortress of Pfalsburg. The fortress of Pfalsburg closed the road from Saverne to the Saar, and was a standing menace to the railway in the Zorn Valley. It was bombarded by troops of the Eleventh Corps on the evening of the 10th of August. On the 11th of August the investment was handed over to troops of the Sixth Corps. On August 14. the 14th the place was bombarded by ten batteries; fire broke out, but the gallant commandant, Taillant, refused to surrender. On the 19th the investment was handed over to the Landwehr, and on the 12th of December the fortress gave in to Jamins.

Situation on August 12 (see sketch). Third Army.

*Situation on the 12th of August (Third Army).*

Twelfth Division (Sixth Corps)	...	at Saarunion.
Second Bavarian Corps	...	„ Fenestrang.
First „ „	...	„ Bettborn.
Wurtemberg Division	...	„ Rauwiller.
Fifth Corps	...	„ Altroff.
Eleventh Corps	...	„ Saarburg.
Fourth Cavalry Division	Heming to Moyenvic.	
Eleventh Division (Sixth Corps)	...	at Pfalsburg.
Second Cavalry Division	...	„ Bouxwiller.
Baden Division observing Strasburg.		

Reduction of front.

On the completion of the passage of the Vosges as above, the front of the army was reduced to nine miles.

*Advance of the Crown Prince to the Moselle.*

August 12. The advance of the Third Army was ordered to be continued on the line Nancy-Luneville; the trains to follow as far as the Meurthe and Moselle. (Sketch 1.)

August 13. The main body reached the line Dieuze-Blamont, occupying a front of eighteen miles.

August 14. On the 14th of August, the Fourth Cavalry Division

reached Nancy, and seized the French mail bags. From the letters found, it appeared that a considerable force was in their neighbourhood, that a battle was considered imminent, and that large forces were assembling at Chalons. The patrols were pushed forward, and the bridges at Froward and Pont St. Vincent found intact, but the stone bridge at Basse-Flavigny was destroyed. On this day the main body reached the line Moyenvic-Luneville, the Twelfth Division and First Bavarian Corps being in second line. Considerable stores were found at Luneville. Intelligence was received that MacMahon had retreated to Chalons, and De Failly to the southern passes of the Vosges. The fortress of Marsal surrendered without a struggle; there was no artillery in the place. On the 15th of August, advanced August 15. guards were pushed forward across the Meurthe. The bridge at Bayon, on the Moselle, was found to be destroyed: two pontoon bridges were thrown. On this day the Second Cavalry Division arrived. On the following day advanced guards were pushed forward to the August 16. Moselle, and the bridge at Basse-Flavigny was repaired. The Second Cavalry Division was sent out in the direction of Baccarat to reconnoitre for De Failly; the Fourth Cavalry Division to watch the Toul-Colombey road. The Cavalry of the Second Bavarian Division on this day summoned Toul to surrender.

*Advance of the First and Second Armies.*

The morning after the battle of Spicheren was August 7. principally spent in collecting the scattered troops, reconnoitring towards the south and west, and preparing for the advance to Metz. Since it was believed that the French would endeavour to retain possession of

Bredow's Cavalry Brigade of the Fifth Cavalry Division was ordered to reach Rohrbach by 8 a.m. on the 8th of August.

With the same object, the Guard Cavalry Division and a division of infantry of the Guard were ordered to be ready to support the Fourth Corps at Gros Rederching on the 8th, while the Tenth Corps was ordered to march in a south-westerly direction. (Sketch 1.)

August 8. Saargemünd was occupied without resistance on the 8th; the Fourth Corps deployed in order of battle between Klein Rederching and Rohrbach, with the Second Corps in rear. As no enemy appeared, however, the following movements took place:—

Fourth Corps Advance Guard	to Lorentzen.
Guard Corps ... ..	„ Gros Rederching.
Tenth Corps ... ..	„ Saargemünd.
Ninth Corps ... ..	„ Bexbach.
Twelfth Corps ... ..	„ Homburg.
Third Corps ... ..	remained stationary.

These movements caused such an increase of front, that the cavalry was redistributed as follows:—Sixth Cavalry Division was assigned to the Third Corps; Bredow's Brigade of the Fifth Cavalry Division was to remain with the Fourth Corps; and the Brigades of Barby and Redern of the Fifth Cavalry Division were placed at the disposal of the Tenth Corps.

During the day the enemy was observed to be retreating westwards; the strong rear guard of the French Third Corps at St. Avold protecting the movement, and withdrawing itself the same evening.

August 9. On the 9th, the First Army remained stationary, while the Second Army continued the forward wheel to the right. Intelligence was received on this day that Boulay and Bouzonville were evacuated. The employment of the cavalry of the First Army was now

restricted, owing to the difficult and wooded nature of the country.

On the 10th, the troops of the First Army were moved August 10. on to the roads allotted to them, and the cavalry placed in second line, a difficult and arduous undertaking. Of the Second Army, the Third Corps remained in its advanced position beyond St. Avold, while the Ninth Corps moved forward beyond Saarbrücken; the Tenth Corps moved to Puttelange, the Twelfth in rear of the Tenth Corps; the Guard to Saarlbe, and the Fourth Corps to Saarunion; the cavalry of the Second Army moved out well to the front and left flank.

During the 11th, intelligence received indicated an August 11. offensive movement from Metz, and at 7 p.m. the following order was issued:—

“A closer concentration being desirable, the Third Corps at Faulquemont will form the point *d'appui*. The First Army will move two corps on the line Boulay-Marange, and one corps to Boucheporn. The Second Army will push forward the Ninth Corps to Longeville, west of St. Avold; Tenth Corps to follow Third Corps. The Guard, Fourth and Twelfth Corps to be brought up to the left wing of the position, so as to close up, or continue the march on Nancy, according to circumstances.”

On the 12th these positions were taken up, forming August 12. a front of eighteen miles, which was occupied by five Army Corps; the second line being formed by four Army Corps. By this time the cavalry divisions of the First Army had again advanced to the front. Some cavalry of the Tenth Corps on this day commenced to destroy the rail and telegraph on the left bank of the Moselle, at Pont-à-Mousson, but were interrupted in their work before it was completed; a similar attempt at Frouard was beaten off. Nancy was entered. It was

gathered that part of Canrobert's corps was being transported by rail from Chalons to Metz ; that the French positions west of the Nied had been abandoned, but that the French still remained in force to the east of Metz ; also that the country south of Metz was entirely unoccupied by the enemy, and even the passages of the Moselle were free. Accordingly, the following orders were issued :—

Orders  
for 13th  
from the  
Imperial  
head-quarters.

“First Army to advance to French Nied ; cavalry to reconnoitre towards Metz, and cross the Moselle below that place. Second Army to march on the line Buchy-Château Salins with outposts to Seille, and endeavour to secure the passages at Pont-à-Mousson, Dieulouard, etc. The Third Army to continue to line Nancy-Luneville.”

Strategical  
situation.

The First Army had thus to be prepared for an attack by the superior forces of the French, who were only nine miles distant. If this should take place, the Nied formed a suitable line of defence ; and even if the First Army were compelled to give way, the mere fronting of the Second Army would forbid pursuit.

On the other hand, if the French should attempt an offensive movement against the Second Army, advancing in considerable breadth towards the Moselle, the First Army would immediately attack them.

Should the French retire through Metz, and advance up stream to meet the Second Army on the further bank, it could, if necessary, fall back on the Third Army, while the First Army, leaving troops to observe Metz, would cross immediately above the fortress and take the French in rear.

August 13.

On the 13th the left wing of the Second Army approached the Moselle by forced marches. Pont-à-Mousson was immediately occupied ; and, screened by cavalry, the Second Army moved into the position assigned to it. In immediate support of the Army were—

Third Corps	...	...	...	...	at Béchy and Buchy.
Ninth "	advance guard			...	" Hermy.
Twelfth "	...	...	...	...	" Thicourt.
Second "	...	...	...	...	" St. Avold.

With regard to the First Army, two corps were to occupy a line of four miles and a half on the French Nied, with one corps in rear on the German Nied.

On the 14th the First Army remained in position August 14. on the French Nied, the Eighth Corps being in reserve on the German Neid. Of the Second Army, the Third Corps took up a position abreast of Pagny, on the Metz-Nancy road; the Ninth Corps at Buchy on the Metz-Strasburg road. These two corps, only five miles distant from the French outposts, were ready to take part in any action in which the First Army might become engaged. The remainder of the Second Army moved on to the line of the Moselle, between Marbache and Pont-à-Mousson, the Tenth Corps sending its advanced brigade to Thiaucourt. (Sketch 3.) Cavalry reconnaissances were pushed as far as Toul, beyond Thiaucourt, and *via* Buxières as far as the Metz-Verdun road. No enemy was observed in the last direction.

*Movements of the French Army round Metz from the  
12th to 14th of August.*

On the 12th of August the Emperor of the French August 12. handed over the supreme command to Bazaine, with definite instructions to retreat through Metz to Chalons. Many bridges across the Moselle had previously been prepared, but had for the most part been rendered useless by floods. The next day was occupied in arranging August 13. the details of the passage, which was to be commenced on the morning of the 14th.

The French cavalry patrols did not report the pre- August 14.



sence of any enemy on the morning of the 14th, and the retreat was accordingly commenced. By 3 p.m. half the French army was across the river.

*The Battle of Colombey.*

Action of  
Colombey.

The officer commanding the advance guard of the Seventh German Army Corps, observing from Laquenexy that the French were defiling across the river, and aware of the contingency that the Second Army might be attacked in crossing to the left bank, determined to attack at once, with the single brigade then at his disposal; at the same time informing the First, Seventh, and Ninth Corps of his intention.

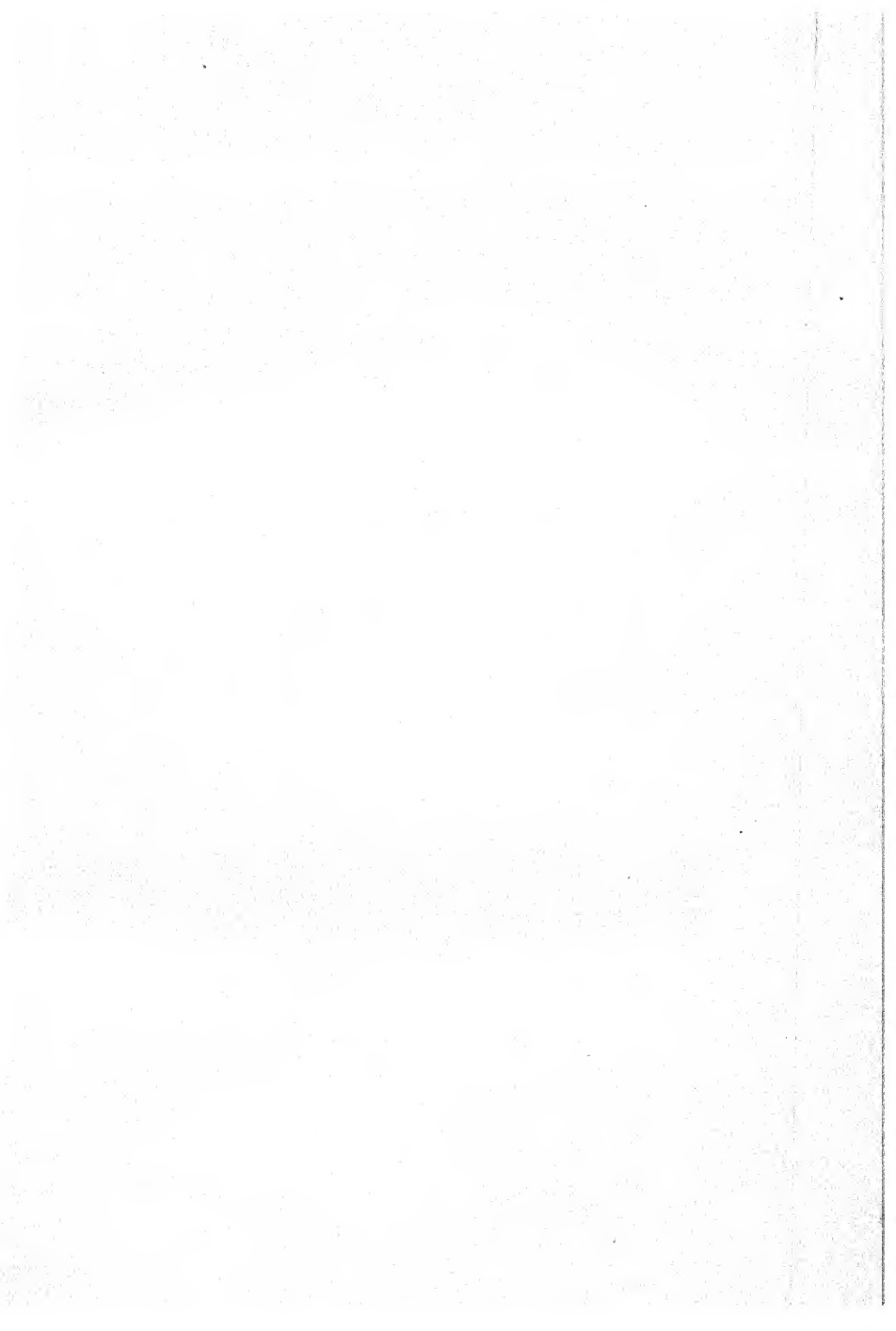
The Third French Corps was deployed in two lines, facing east, on the heights above Colombey in order to cover the passage of the French Army to the left bank; this corps was in the act of withdrawing when they were attacked by Von der Goltz' Brigade.

This vanguard action soon developed into a general engagement, on the arrival of the advanced troops of the First and Seventh Corps and Second Cavalry Division. A portion of the French Fourth Corps which had already crossed the river, was brought back, and successfully aided the Third Corps in repelling the German attack. When night set in, neither side had given way.

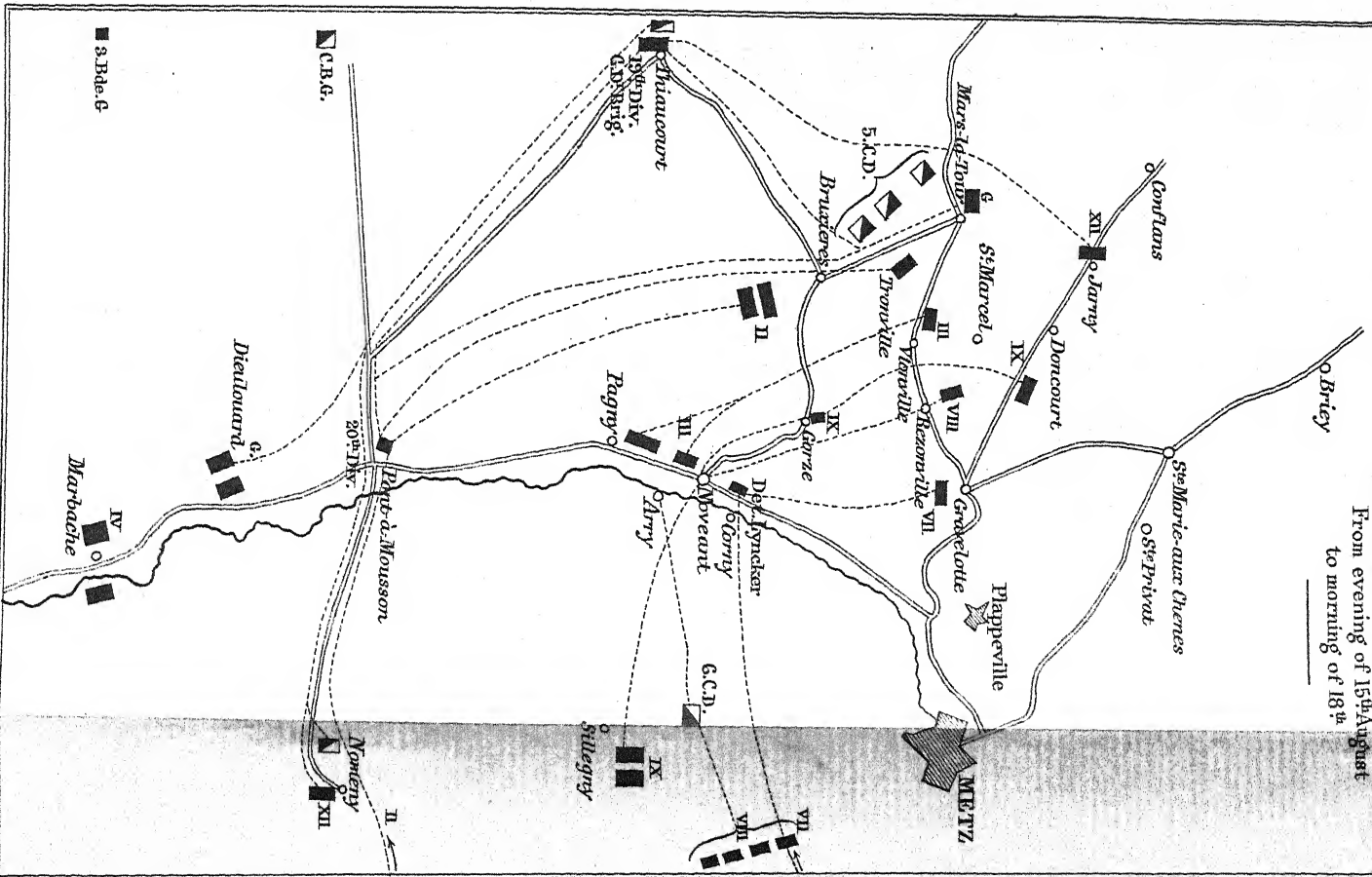
August 15.

Throughout the 15th, the French continued their movement across the Moselle. Great delay was caused by the insufficient bridging of the river, and the enormous amount of unnecessary baggage, in addition to the inevitable confusion consequent upon the extraordinarily laconic instructions given by Bazaine for the march.\*

\* Bazaine's orders for this important march are worthy of note, as evidencing his utter incapacity for the trust committed to his charge by the Emperor. "The First and Third Divisions of



MOVEMENTS OF GERMAN TROOPS  
From evening of 15th August  
to morning of 18th







By evening of this day, the Second and Sixth French Corps were in the neighbourhood of Rezonville, the Guard in rear of them on the Gravelotte plateau. The presence of the German cavalry of the Second Army made itself felt, but no importance appears to have been attached to the fact.

On this same evening, the Third, Tenth, Guard, and Fourth German Corps were on the line of the Moselle; the Nineteenth Division (Tenth Corps) at Thiaucourt.

Third Corps	...	...	...	Noveant to Pagny.
Guard	...	...	...	Dieulouard.
Tenth Corps	...	...	...	Pont-à-Mousson.
Fourth Corps	...	...	...	Marbache and Custines.

The cavalry of the Second Army had been sent across the river, and bivouacked on the night of the 15th as follows :—

Redern's Brigade	...	...	...	at Xonville.
Barby's	„	...	...	„ Puxieux.
Bredow's	„	...	...	„ Suzemont.
Guard Dragoon Brigade	...	...	...	„ Thiaucourt.

During the 15th several skirmishes took place on the line Rezonville-Mars-la-Tour. The French did not attempt to push their reconnaissances, but fell back to Vionville.

Reserve Cavalry will quit their camps at 1 p.m. to move in the direction of Verdun; the First Division by the road Gravelotte-Conflans; the Third Division by the road Gravelotte-Mars-la-Tour. The Third and Fourth Corps will take the former of these roads; the Second and Sixth Corps the latter; the Guard will follow the Sixth Corps." Such was Bazaine's order for the withdrawal of a large army from before the enemy, across a wide and insufficiently bridged river! The order was received by the various corps in the following positions :—Second Corps at Peltre and Magny; Sixth Corps between Moselle and Seille; Guard about Bellecroix; Third Corps about Grigy, Colombey, Montoy, and Nouilly; Fourth Corps facing the enemy in front of Metz. This order was produced in evidence against Bazaine at his trial.

A squadron of Lancers was detached from Bredow's Brigade in a northerly direction, but, falling in with French cavalry at Jarnny, retired by way of Mars-la-Tour, where they fell into an ambushade of Chasseurs d'Afrique and lost some men.

The French scouts annoyed the outposts of the Fifth Cavalry Division so persistently, that whole squadrons had to be sent to drive them back.

On the evening of this day, 20,000 French of all arms were observed on the heights above Vionville and Rezonville.

August 16. On the 16th, the battle of Mars-la-Tour was fought with the results detailed already (Battle of Mars-la-Tour).

August 17. Preparations on both sides for the following day. (See Battle of Gravelotte.)

August 18. Battle of Gravelotte.

August 19. French army invested in Metz. The Army of the Meuse, or Fourth Army formed by the Emperor of Germany, and detached to co-operate with the Army of the Crown Prince (Third Army) in its advance upon Chalons and Paris. (See page 14: Advance of the Third Army.)

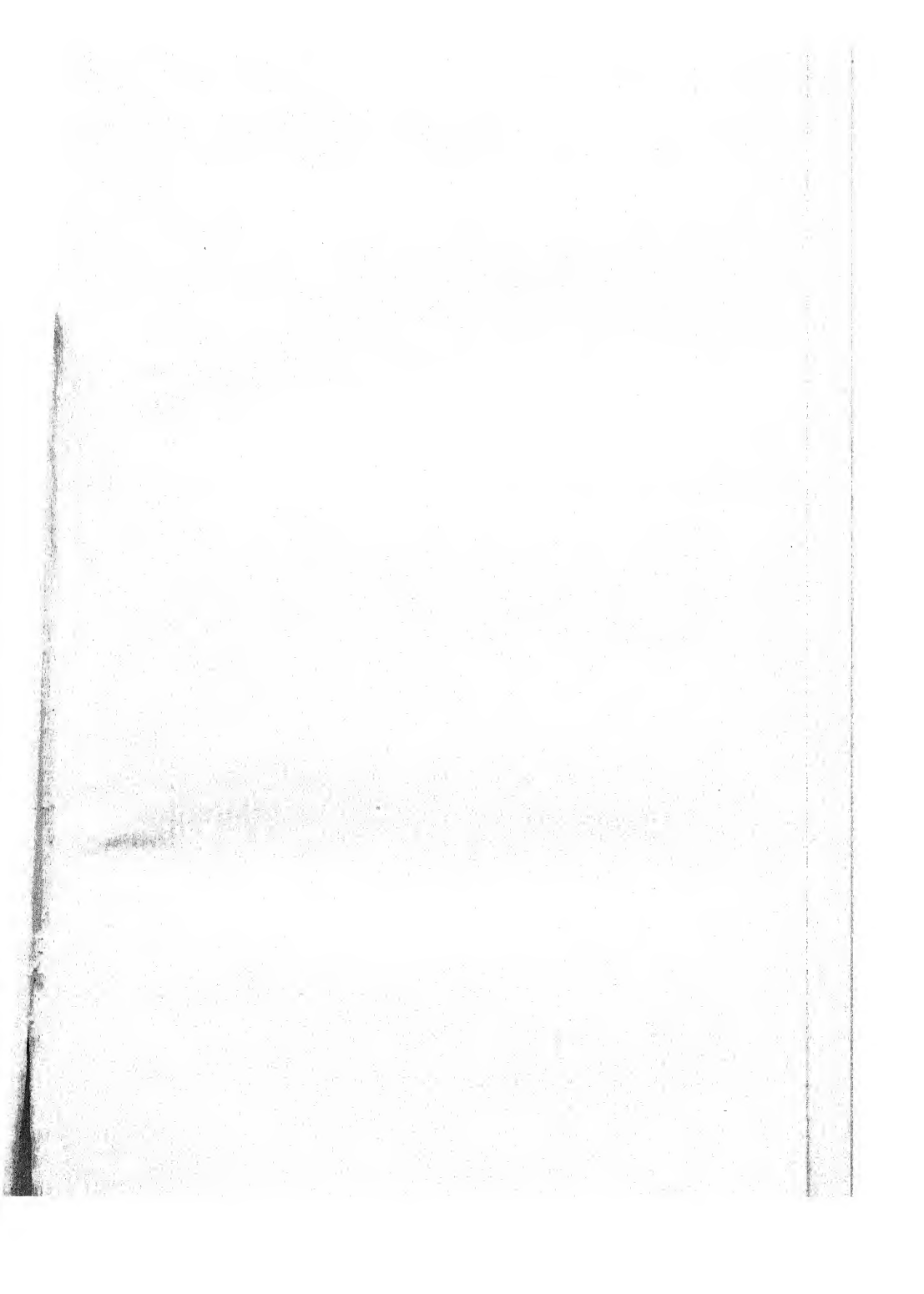
#### *Continuation of MacMahon's Retreat.*

Army of  
Chalons.

MacMahon had succeeded by the 20th in concentrating his army at Chalons. The French force at this place consisted now of the First, Fifth, and Seventh Corps, and the Twelfth Corps, which was quite fresh and not demoralized by defeat. Also, the cavalry divisions of Bonnemain and Margueritte. Total strength, 120,000 men and 324 guns.

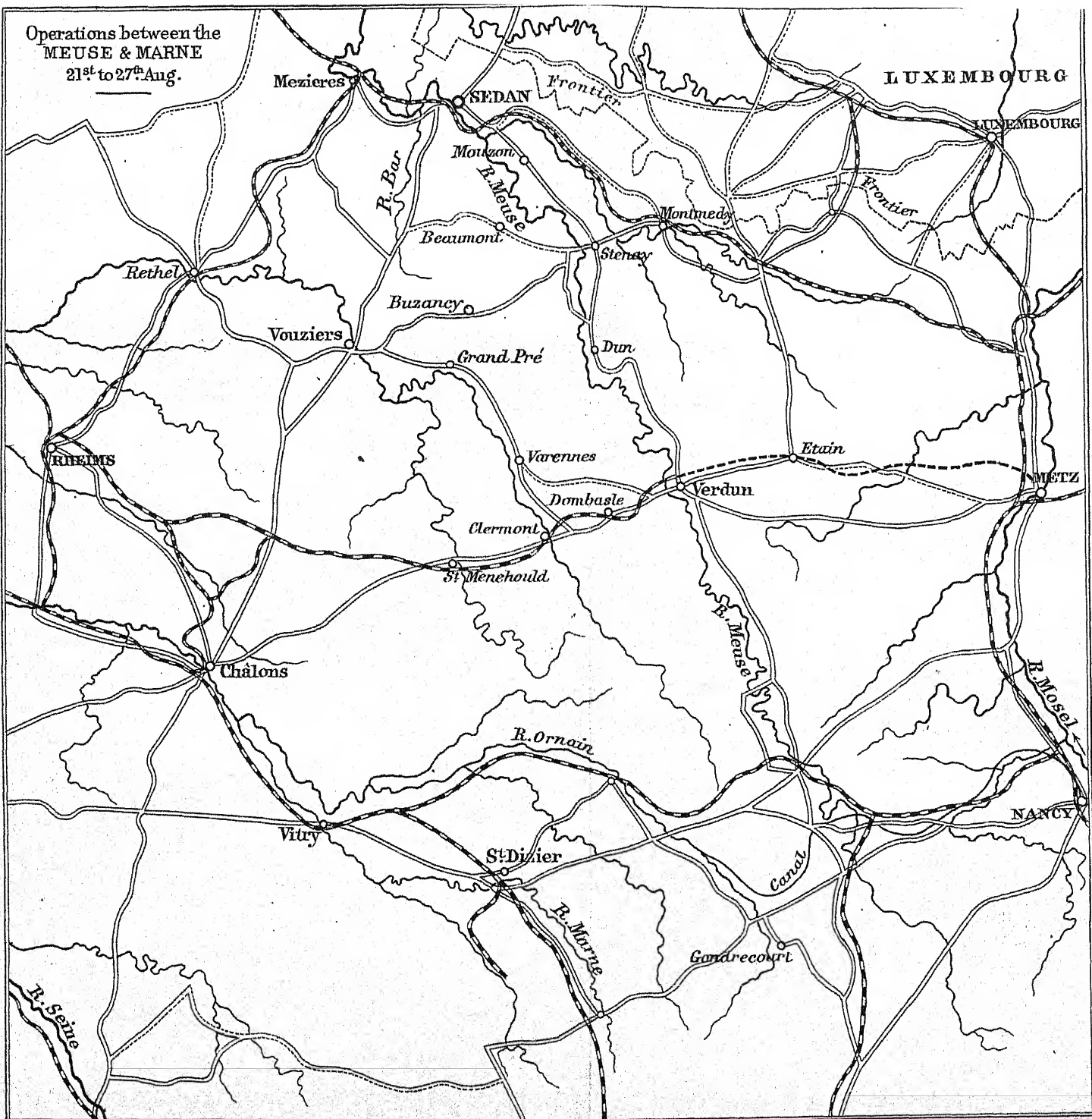
August 21. MacMahon commenced his march northwards, with

August 22. the view of retreating on Paris. A telegram was received





Operations between the  
MEUSE & MARNE  
21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> Aug.



from Bazaine, stating that he believed he could continue his retreat in a north-west direction through Montmédy. The orders for the retreat on Paris were therefore cancelled, and on the morning of the 23rd, MacMahon August 23. started in column of corps in a north-eastern direction towards Dun and Stenay, the direct route through Verdun being intercepted. Bazaine was informed of this movement. The movement was continued without August 24. any interruption.

MacMahon halted on the line Vouziers-Rethel, for August 25. the purpose of rationing his troops.\* Considerable difficulty was experienced throughout the march, on the score of commissariat and transport arrangements, owing to the faulty organization of the French Army in this respect.

MacMahon wheeled to the right on the pivot of August 26. Vouziers, for the purpose of continuing the advance in two columns on the Beaumont and Buzancy roads. The presence of the enemy at Grand Pré having been reported, the Seventh Corps somewhat unnecessarily formed up in battle order.

MacMahon moved three corps into the line Vouziers- August 27. Buzancy, to guard against any attack from the south; counter-orders were subsequently issued for the march northwards to be resumed.

Owing to the threatening advance of the enemy, the August 28. idea of relieving Bazaine had to be abandoned, and the march northwards was resumed; but, owing to subsequent peremptory orders from the War Ministry, MacMahon was compelled to forego this plan, which his own judgment had pronounced to be the most sound,

\* On the 25th of August, MacMahon's force had been increased by the arrival of various detachments, and now amounted to 408 guns and 84 mitrailleuses, with a slight addition to the number of combatants.

of the Crown Prince of Saxony; this army was henceforth designated as the Fourth Army, or Army of the Meuse.

On the 20th of August, the Third Army halted temporarily in order to allow the Fourth Army to come up in line on the right.

The Third and Fourth Armies reached the line Etain- August 22.  
Gondrecourt (fifty miles); the cavalry reconnoitred in advance as far as the Marne valley.\*

Aware that the French were in the vicinity of Chalons, August 23.  
the advance westwards was continued on a broad front.

The most advanced troops reached the line Verdun- August 24.  
St. Dizier, and on the following day the line Dombasle- August 25.  
Vitry. The cavalry of the right wing penetrated through the Argonnes to St. Meneshould.

### *Review of the Situation on the 25th of August.*

On this day the French were moving *eastward* to Montmédy; the Germans, two days' march to the south, were moving *westward* on Paris, in complete ignorance of the movements of the enemy. The first information that the Germans received of the evacuation of Chalons was by a telegram on the night of the 24th, stating that MacMahon had taken up his position at Rheims, and was about to relieve Bazaine. Since, however, the direct road to Metz was barred by the Army of the Meuse, it was clear that the only way of attaining his object

#### *\* Strength of Third and Fourth Armies.*

Third Army, consisting of Fifth, Sixth, and Eleventh Corps;  
First and Second Bavarian Corps, and Wurtemberg Division;  
Second and Fourth Cavalry Divisions.

		Infantry.	Cavalry.	Guns.
Third Army	...	118,095	19,567	525
Fourth Army	...	70,028	16,247	288
Grand Total	...	188,123	35,814	813

was to undertake a flank march close to the Belgian frontier. Such a movement seemed in the last degree improbable, and the Germans contented themselves with directing their general advance in a north-westerly direction.

MacMahon, on the other hand, was fully aware of the German numbers and positions on the 21st, and his flank march was undertaken with a full knowledge of the risk incurred. The delay at Rheims and Rethel had already imperilled the movement.

August 26. On the 26th the Army of the Meuse changed front with the object of moving in a northerly direction; the leading troops reached Varennes. The Third Army closed in to its right flank; the cavalry covered the movement in a wide arc from Dun to Chalons.

August 27. From reports of cavalry it was gathered that troops of all arms had been seen at Vouziers and Buzancy; the orders for the march northwards were therefore confirmed. The Meuse Army seized the passages at Dun and Stenay; the Third Army reached the line Clermont-St. Menehould.

August 28. The Fourth Army brought up the corps in rear on the left bank of the Meuse; the Third Army advanced up the valley of the Aisne.

August 29. The Fourth Army for the most part halted, the Twelfth Corps only being pushed forward. The Third Army advanced to line Grand Pré-Dun. Both German armies completed their deployment by the evening of this day, and there were now between the Meuse and the Argonnes six army corps ready for an advance upon Beaumont.

#### *Events of the 30th of August.*

The French had now to bend all their energies to the task of crossing the Meuse. The Twelfth Corps

had crossed at Mouzon on the 29th ; but the First Corps did not complete the crossing at Remilly until late on the night of the 30th. On the southern road, the Fifth Corps, after its hard marching and demoralizing retreat, was suddenly awakened from its fancied security at Beaumont by the thunder of the German Artillery. The subsequent advance of the Twelfth Saxon and First Bavarian Corps and deployment into line, rendered retreat through the village compulsory, and, finally, the position taken up at Beaumont was relinquished with heavy loss. Pressed in front and on their flank, the Fifth Corps retired fighting on Mouzon, assisted in their retreat by the wooded and intersected nature of the country ; the river was crossed under the protection of part of the Twelfth Corps.

The Seventh Corps, harassed in the rear by cavalry, left Oches at 9 a.m., marching on the Meuse by two roads. The rear of the leading division lost its way during the march, and, approaching close to Beaumont, was utterly routed by the First Bavarian Corps. The main body crossed the river at Remilly late on the night of the 30th. Seventh  
French  
Corps.

Owing to the defeats sustained by various bodies of his troops, and the harassing nature of the marches in which they had lately been engaged, MacMahon ordered a general retreat upon Sedan for the purpose of giving his exhausted troops the rest which they so much needed, and replenishing the stores of food and ammunition. Early on the morning of the 31st the greater part of MacMahon's army was bivouacked round the fortress.

By the evening of the 30th, the two German armies were collected in a concentrated mass on the left bank of the river, their leading troops occupying the line Mouzon-Raucourt.

During the early morning, French fugitives came August 31.

pouring into Sedan. The Twelfth Corps arrived at Bazeilles at 9 a.m., after a sharp skirmish with the Bavarian troops at the railway bridge. The bridge was eventually left intact in the hands of the enemy.

First  
French  
Corps.

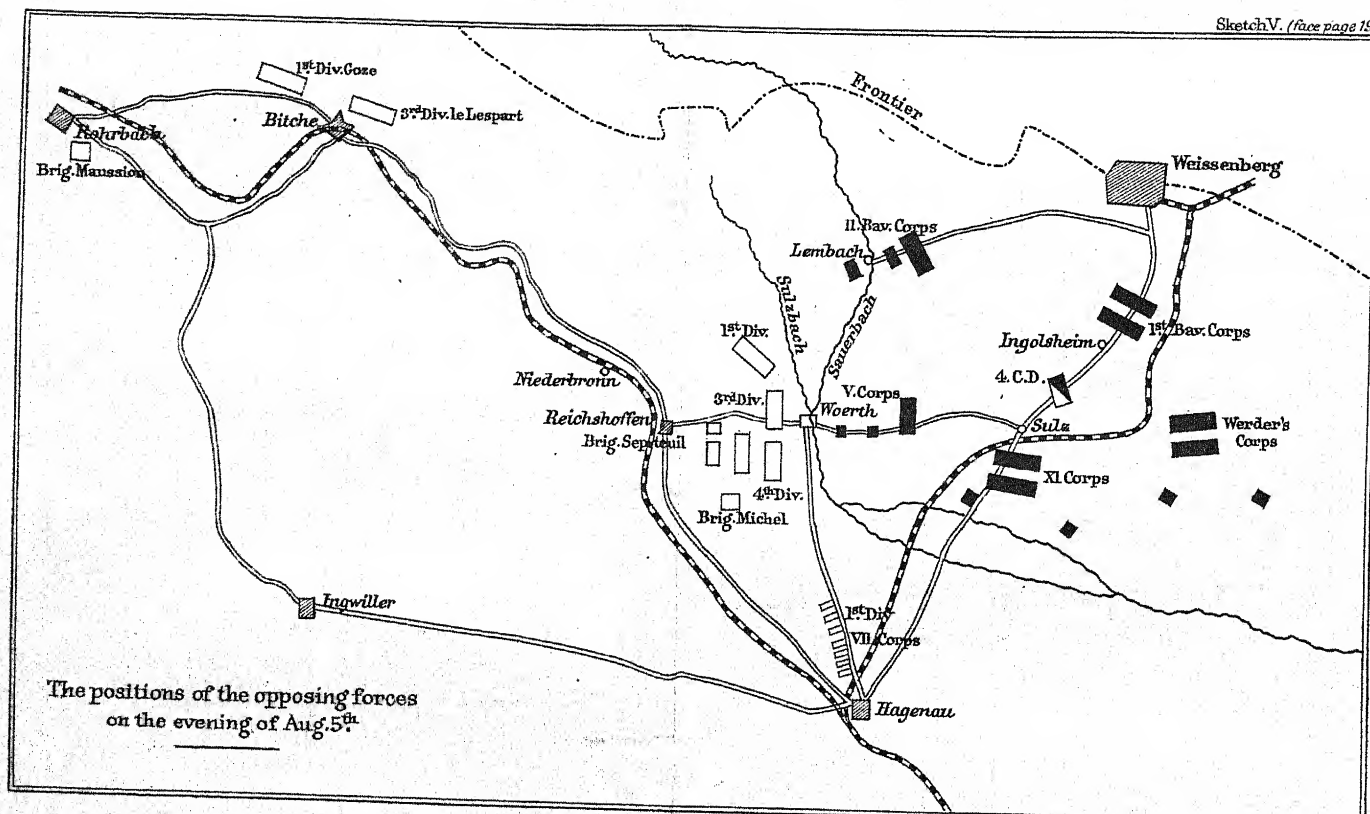
The First Corps, owing to mistaken orders, did not reach its camping-ground until late at night.

No orders for any further movement were issued by MacMahon on this day.

German  
armies.

The German armies continued marching northwards. From the Army of the Meuse the Guard and Twelfth Corps were detached to the right bank of the Meuse, to bar the space between the river and the frontier.

The bold march of MacMahon had thus completely failed, owing to defective organization. The history of the French transport service, and the inefficiency of the commissariat during the march from Chalons to Sedan, forms one of the most melancholy pages in the gloomy record of maladministration and blunder which throughout the war cast their dark shadows over the fortunes of the French arms. (See Battle of Sedan.)



The positions of the opposing forces  
on the evening of Aug. 5<sup>th</sup>





## BATTLE OF WOERTH.

THE positions of the French and German armies on the eve of the battle of Woerth are shown in the sketch. The position of the French First Corps had been chosen by MacMahon as early as the 4th of August, and, in company with Bonnemain's cavalry (Second Reserve Cavalry Division), was concentrated at Froeschwiller.

Positions  
of oppos-  
ing forces  
on the eve  
of August  
6.

Conseil Dumesnil's Division of the Seventh Corps had been recalled from Müllhausen, and, having reached Hagenau on the morning of the 5th, was concentrated on the right of the First Corps early on the morning of the 6th. Lespart's Division of the Fifth Corps, from Bitsch, was under orders to join the First Corps on the morning of the 6th, and the other divisions of the corps to follow as they arrived from Bitsch.

The French troops on the morning of the 6th of August occupied a line from Neewiller, through Froeschwiller and Elsasshausen, as far as the heights east of Eberbach; the extent of this line was three and a half miles, and was occupied by 45,000 men. In front of the position was the Sauer brook,\* difficult to cross except at the bridges. The chaussée Hagenau to Woerth runs in the Sauer valley; it is somewhat raised

Descrip-  
tion of the  
field.

\* Opposite Woerth, the Sauer brook is about ten yards wide, and from three to six feet deep; the banks are nearly perpendicular, and the nature of the bottom, as a rule clay, is at this point gravel.

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tion of the  
field.

\* Opposite Woerth, the Sauer brook is about ten yards wide, and from three to six feet deep; the banks are nearly perpendicular, and the nature of the bottom, as a rule clay, is at this point gravel.

above the meadow land, and thus forms a good line of defence.

The meadow land, averaging one thousand paces in breadth, which borders the brook, afforded no cover to an enemy approaching from the east. The eastern slope of the valley is commanded at all points from the western, and the latter only approaches tolerably near the Sauer at Goersdorf, and a little to the north of that place. The stream is everywhere within effective musketry range from the west heights, the slopes of which, from their steepness and extent of cultivation, offer serious obstacles to the ascent. The weakest point of the position in front is the spur of the Niederwald, opposite Spachbach, where an enemy might form a lodgment in the edge of the wood, without being much exposed to fire. In front of the centre lies Woerth, a strongly built village, with a bridge over the stream, covering the main road through Froeschwiller to Reichshoffen. The village of Froeschwiller, commanding the field in all directions, is situated on a plateau at the junction of several roads leading to the Sauer valley; it is highly defensible, and was the key of the French position. The interior of the position was strengthened with judiciously placed field-works. The passages at Gunstett and Durenbach were within easy artillery range; and the reserves, posted in rear of the right flank, as well as the open nature of the ground, seemed to forbid any direct attack at this point; while any extensive flanking movement could only be made through the Hagenau forest to the south, and was therefore scarcely taken into consideration.

The left flank, however, was exposed to the danger of an enemy making an attack by the Mattstall-Langensulzbach road, under cover of the forest; this flank was therefore refused.

The German troops of the Third Army, under the

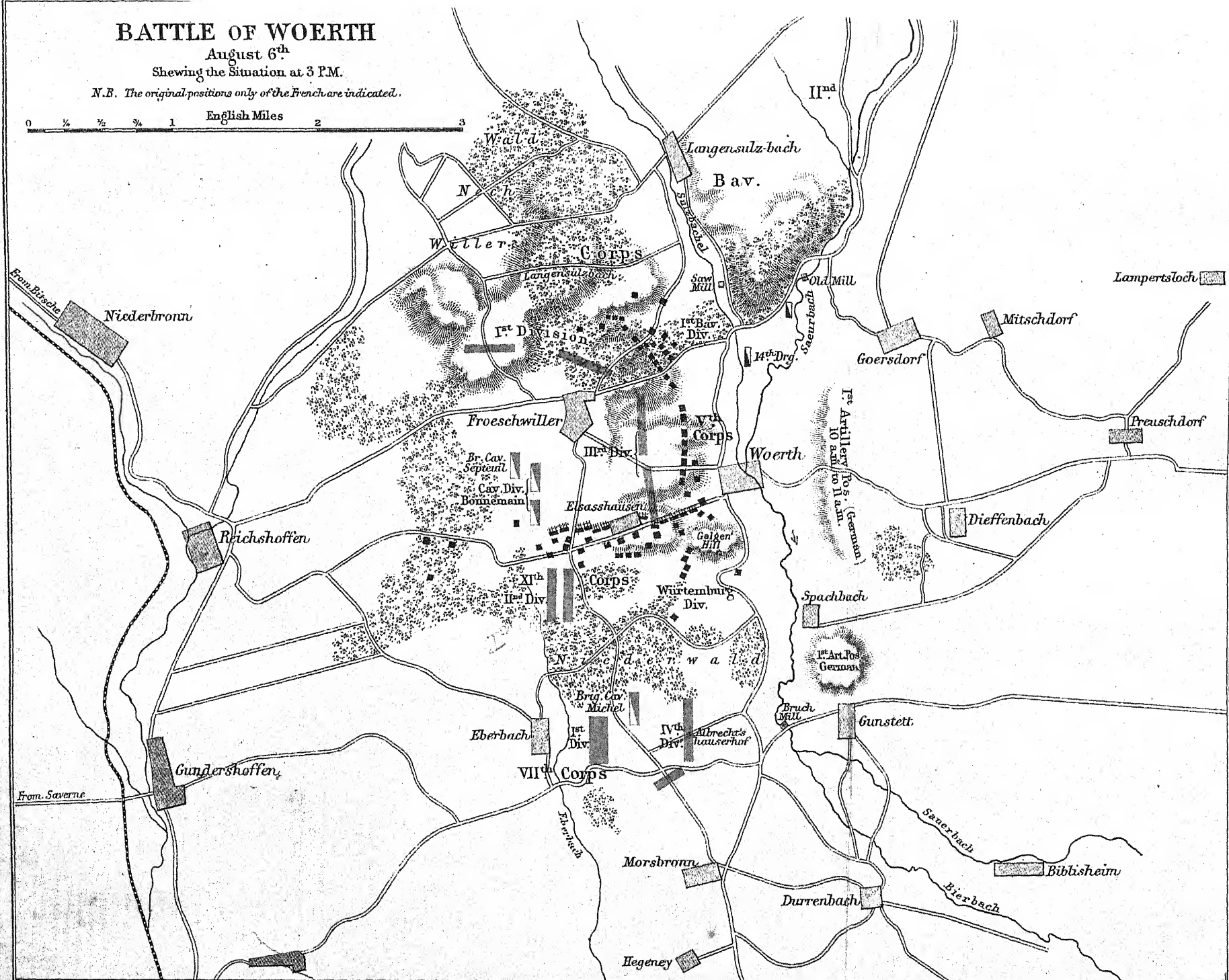
# BATTLE OF WOERTH

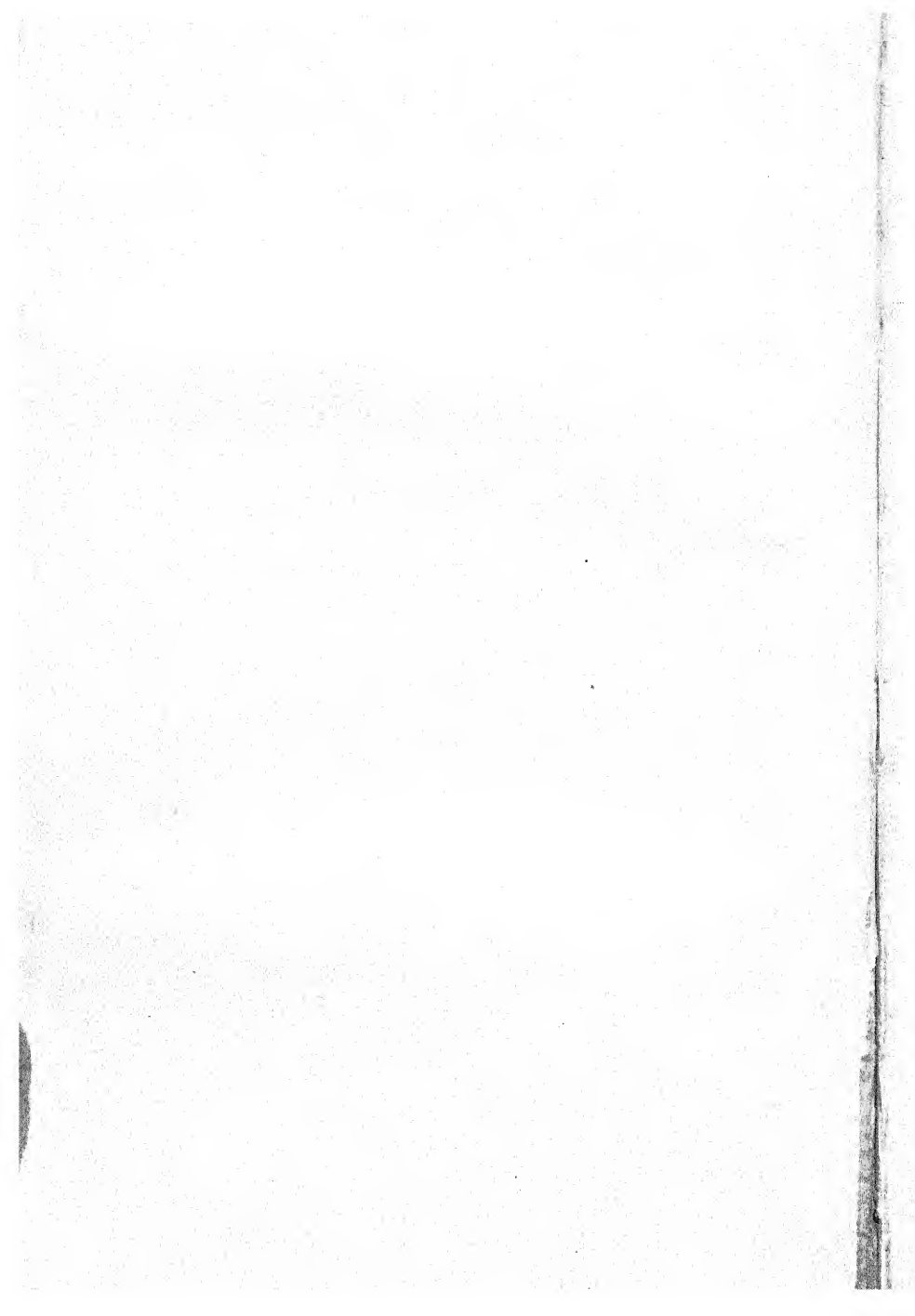
August 6<sup>th</sup>

Shewing the Situation at 3 P.M.

N.B. The original positions only of the French are indicated.

0 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 2 3 English Miles





command of the Crown Prince, were in the positions shown in the sketch on the evening of the 5th of August. The orders for the following day simply indicated a change of front to the west, and included no plan of battle. (See Sketch 5.)

During the night, and especially towards daybreak of the 6th, severe skirmishes had taken place between the outposts in front of the Fifth German Corps. Between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. a reconnaissance in force was ordered by General von Walther, commanding the Twentieth Brigade of the Fifth Corps. Woerth was occupied with little or no opposition, but in issuing from the town such a vigorous fire was directed against the reconnoitring party, as convinced the commander that the French were in great force. At 8.30 a.m. the action was broken off, and the troops engaged returned to their bivouacs.

Simultaneously with the reconnaissance at Woerth, a demonstration was made by the French at Gunstett, as far as the Morsbronn-Woerth road, in the direction of the Bruch Mill. The mill was finally set on fire by the French shells, but even this did not cause the Germans (one company) to evacuate the building, which was of the utmost importance, owing to the fine flanking view which it gave up the valley. The Germans ultimately succeeded in extinguishing the flames.

The Fourth Bavarian Division (Second Corps) had been held in readiness at Mattstall ever since early morning, with the object of assisting in any action which might be brought on at Woerth. Langensulzbach was occupied by the advance guard without opposition, at the same time a slight cannonade was heard in the direction of Woerth, and an extensive bivouac observed on the Froeschwiller heights. As the cannonade increased, General von Hartmann, commanding the Second Bavarian Corps, ordered up the

German  
disposi-  
tions.

Com-  
mence-  
ment of  
the battle.  
Engage-  
ments  
between  
the out-  
posts.

Fighting  
at Gun-  
stett.

Action at  
Langen-  
sulzbach.

reserves from Lembach, and the Fourth Division to move on Froeschwiller. At 8.15 a.m. the advance guard started for the wooded slopes ascending to Neehwiller, but were met at the southern exit of the woods by a heavy fire, which prevented further progress.

More troops having been drawn into the skirmishing line (now four battalions), they succeeded in maintaining themselves at the edge of the wood against several offensive counter-strokes by the enemy.

9.30 a.m.

Reinforce-  
ments on  
the left of  
the Ger-  
mans.

It was now 9.30 a.m., and the firing had become very hot. The German left rested on the saw-mill, and about 10 a.m. was reinforced, making up the front at this point to ten battalions, extending over a distance of two and a quarter miles, from the western skirt of the wood to the Sauer. A battalion and a half, three squadrons, and three batteries were left in reserve at Langensulzbach, and another battery at Mattstall. The firing now became more lively, and the French were pressed specially hard on their right; the Germans, however, were unable to obtain any positions for their artillery on the east bank of the Sulzbach, and no head could be made against the strong heights of Froeschwiller.

No artill-  
ery posi-  
tions for  
the attack.

10.30 a.m.

With-  
drawal out  
of action  
to Langen-  
sulzbach.

At this moment an officer brought verbal instructions to General von Hartmann to suspend the conflict. This somewhat difficult task was safely accomplished by 11.30 a.m., and the troops withdrawn to the rear of Langensulzbach. On the left flank the wooded spur between the Sulzbach and the Sauer was occupied.

Attack on  
Woerth by  
Fifth  
Corps.

Before this movement was quite completed, a communication was received from the Fifth Corps, to the effect that it had been resolved to attack Woerth, and that the co-operation of the Bavarians against the enemy's left flank was expected.

Thus the valuable ground which General von Hartmann had gained with such infinite pains, and

withdrawn from by superior orders, had to be struggled for anew. The thunder of the guns in the neighbourhood of Woerth soon testified that the struggle had commenced, and General von Hartmann ordered up the still effective troops and the Third Division from Lembach.

Independently of this, the struggle was still going on south of Langensulzbach. Two companies of the 37th Regiment, posted by the Fifth Army Corps at Goersdorf, for the purpose of keeping up communication between it and the Bavarians, had crossed the Sauer at the Old Mill and attacked the slopes on the west bank of the Sulzbach, opening up communication with the Bavarian detachment still in action.

We have seen that the fighting at Woerth had been broken off about 8.30 a.m., but when, shortly after, Colonel von der Esch (Chief of the General Staff of the Fifth Corps) arrived, the firing in the direction of Langensulzbach was observed to be increasing in intensity. Under these circumstances, and with the concurrence of the officer commanding the advance guard, he ordered the contest to be resumed at Woerth, in order to prevent the enemy from *turning against one wing* of the German Army with his whole force.

If the orderly officer who carried this intelligence, accompanied with a request for co-operation, to the commander of the Second Bavarian Corps, had succeeded in performing his journey (about four miles close country) somewhat sooner, so as to arrive at Langensulzbach before 10.30 a.m. (the time at which the order from the Crown Prince to break off the action arrived), much valuable time and ground would have been saved to the Bavarians.

At 9.30 a.m. the entire artillery of the German Fifth Corps came into action on both sides of the Dieffenbach-

Continuation of the struggle south of Langensulzbach in the interim.

Commencement of the battle by Fifth Corps, 8.30 a.m.

German artillery in



position,  
9.30.

Woerth road. The French artillery line was from 2400 to 4000 paces distant on the opposite slope.

Mitrail-  
leuses put  
out of  
action.

The 24 guns of the advance guard of the Eleventh German Corps, north-west of Gunstett, opened fire at 10 a.m. in conjunction with the 84 guns of the Fifth Corps, and immediately compelled the mitrailleuses to withdraw out of action. The shells from the French field guns, moreover, seldom burst, and consequently did but little damage among the German batteries. The whole line of French guns was shortly reduced to silence.

Close of  
artillery  
duel.

Occupation of  
Woerth.

As the Twenty-first Brigade (German Sixth Corps) had visibly taken part in the action at Gunstett, and the other portions of the Eleventh Corps were approaching, General von Kirchbach, soon after 10 a.m., ordered the advanced guard to occupy Woerth and the heights beyond. Woerth was found unoccupied; but on issuing from the town the troops were met by a withering fire, under which, however, they continued to advance, until the French brought forward their reserves and drove them back into the town, the western edge of which they succeeded in holding.

Attack on  
the heights  
of Elsass-  
hausen.

To the south of Woerth the left wing endeavoured to storm the Elsasshausen heights, but was taken in flank by the fire from the edge of the Niederwald, and soon afterwards driven back by the forward movement of the French just alluded to.

In front of  
Woerth,  
11.30.

After this unsuccessful attack, the battalions of the Twentieth Brigade, somewhat shattered, occupied a line from Woerth, along the Hagenau road, as far as the Niederwald; this position they maintained with considerable difficulty against the hot fire and repeated attacks of the French, who had obtained firm hold of the western slopes, which, owing to numerous hedges, stone walls, etc., formed a very strong defensive position,

containing many points from which the defenders could suddenly sally out and attack the advancing Germans, whose rearward movements were attended with heavy losses. By 12.30 p.m. the aspect of affairs at Woerth <sup>12.30.</sup> was so threatening, that additional reserves had to be brought up.

Meanwhile, General von Kirchbach (Fifth Corps) had sent word to both the neighbouring corps (Eleventh and Second Bavarian, see *ante*), that he was about to attack the front of the enemy's position, and expected the co-operation of both wings. We have seen that this message reached the Second Corps at 11.15 a.m. At noon, General von Kirchbach received a reply that the engagement had been broken off by superior orders, but would be immediately resumed.

In conformity with the army order of the preceding day, General von Buse (Eleventh Corps) had prescribed the following movements for the 6th :—The Twenty-first <sup>Move-  
ments of  
Eleventh  
Corps.</sup> Division to bivouac south-west of Hölschloch ; advance guard to occupy the forest to the front and west of it ; communications by way of Gunstett. The Twenty-second Division to march on the neighbourhood of Surbourg, to keep a look-out on the side of Hagenau, and communicate with Werder's Corps ; the Corps Artillery to move to Hölschloch ; train to Sulz. At 7 a.m. the sound of guns was heard in the direction of Woerth, while the troops were on the march ; the firing, however, soon ceased.

On emerging from the wood, the advance guard of the Twenty-first Division observed a French camp on the heights behind Gunstett, at the same time the firing at Woerth increased in intensity. A battalion was immediately sent forward to Gunstett to support the Fifth Corps, while the rest of the infantry of the advance guard took up a position at the western issue of the

wood. The Divisional Artillery, further to the left, took up a concealed position south of the wood.

German  
left wing,  
8 a.m.

At 8 a.m. a hostile battery appeared on the opposite heights, and a battalion was observed descending to the attack of Gunstett. The advance guard now went forward; the Divisional Artillery from its position on a height north-west of Gunstett, in conjunction with the left flank Battery of the Fifth Corps, soon succeeded in reducing the hostile artillery to silence.

Attempt  
to cross  
the Sauer  
at Spach-  
bach by  
Eleventh  
Corps.

An attempt was now made to obtain a footing on the western bank of the Sauer, at Spachbach. A crossing was effected, and a dash made, under a heavy mitrailleuse and musketry fire, for the Hagenau high-road and the Niederwald; two companies remained outside, lining a ditch parallel to the road, and between it and the river; the second line of the attacking force, which had formed up on the eastern bank, seeing that the first line was thoroughly committed to a fight for the Niederwald, now advanced across the stream; connection was established with the Fifth Corps, but after some stubborn fighting, in which most of the companies lost their leaders, all unity of action ceased, the skirmishers were driven back, and a hurried retreat was made across the stream.

Germans  
driven  
back.

Attempt  
to cross  
the river  
at Bruch  
Mill.

At the same time, as the above advance was taking place, the force at Gunstett, which had in the meanwhile been reinforced, had sent forward some companies to the western issue of the village, and on the arrival of the Forty-second Brigade (Eleventh Corps) some more companies advanced to the Bruch Mill and the north-west of the village, the Rifle Battalion establishing itself in the vineyards between the village and the mill.

After half an hour's skirmishing, a crossing was effected, and the high-road reached; but almost immediately afterwards these advanced troops were at-

tacked and driven back by a French detachment, which assailed them on the left flank. A stand was made at the bridge, and the pursuit checked; much annoyance was, however, experienced from the musketry fire of a weak French detachment, posted in some hop-gardens near the bridge. Germans driven back.

Thus the three corps of the Third Army had been committed to an engagement, in which no practical advantage had yet been gained, with the exception of a few isolated instances, and in these only with the greatest difficulty and at a heavy sacrifice. The French had continued, up till this time, to make vigorous offensive returns, and generally with sufficient success to warrant confidence in the strength of their position. General situation at 12 noon.

We have seen that the attack had been ordered to be discontinued, and that in consequence of this, the Second Bavarian Corps on the right wing had already commenced to withdraw from the contest, when a message from General von Kirchbach (Fifth Corps) was received, requesting co-operation in the meditated attack on Wöerth.

This brings us to the close of the period of more or less desultory and disunited fighting which had prevailed up till noon; and we will now examine the reasons which led General von Kirchbach to continue the fight contrary to the expressed wishes of the Crown Prince.

He had to weigh the following considerations :—

1. The Commander-in-Chief had only contemplated a change of front for that day, and, his forces not being sufficiently concentrated for a general action, had sent orders "not to continue the struggle, and to avoid everything which might lead to a fresh one." General von Kirchbach's decision to continue the action.

2. The Second Bavarian Corps, having received this order from head-quarters, had withdrawn the greater

part of its troops to Lembach, and no *immediate* co-operation could be expected from that quarter.

3. The Eleventh Corps had been forced back over the Sauer.

4. Though the enemy's artillery above Woerth had been temporarily silenced, and a footing actually established on the right bank, it was manifest that a direct attack on the French position at this point, would not only be a most hazardous undertaking, but *must* bring on a decisive action.

On the other hand—

1. The attack at Woerth could not be broken off without great loss to the advance guard.

2. The French could claim a victory, if the Germans withdrew to the left bank.

3. It was believed that the French were receiving constant reinforcements, so that a deferred attack only promised greater difficulties.

4. An immediate attack in front offered decisive results, even though the co-operation of the troops at Langensulzbach and Gunstett could not be brought about until later.

General von Kirchbach, having carefully weighed these conflicting considerations, decided, as already stated, to continue the attack; and it is from this point that the battle proper may really be said to have commenced.

Before commencing the account of the events of the afternoon, the isolated attack on Neehwiller must be noticed.

Attack on  
Neeh-  
willer.

During the morning, the French appearing weak at Neehwiller, a sudden attack by a small force seemed to hold out fair prospects of success. Accordingly, two companies, a squadron, and a battery, were detached for this service, but were driven back to Langensulzbach.

The thunder of the guns at Woerth having increased in intensity, the Crown Prince hastened to the spot, and was met on the way thither by General von Kirchbach's report. At 1 p.m. the prince reached the heights in front of Woerth, and assumed command.

Arrival of  
the Crown  
Prince,  
1 p.m.

It will be advisable, before proceeding further with the account of the battle, to trace the movements of the First Bavarian Corps and Werder's Corps, previous to the arrival of the Crown Prince.

The First Bavarian Corps, under the command of General von der Tann, was to come into line between the Second Bavarian Corps and the Fifth Corps. The advance guard reached Lampertsloch at 10.30 a.m. Two squadrons of the advance guard had already moved out to indicate the line of outposts to be taken up between Matstall and Goersdorf.

Movements of  
First  
Bavarian  
Corps.

At 11.30 a.m. the officer commanding the First Division, owing to the increasing intensity of the artillery fire, directed his advance upon Froeschwiller. Written orders were sent to the First Brigade of the Division to follow, and the Light Artillery to come up at an increased pace. At 1 p.m. the most advanced troops had reached Goersdorf, and the First Brigade was advancing from Preuschdorf, while the rest of the corps was about Lobsann.

The main body of the Wurtembergers reached Reimerswiller at 10 a.m. At 11 a.m. General Werder was informed by General von Bose that he had ordered the Eleventh Corps to advance on Gunstett. The 1st Brigade of the Wurtembergers was ordered to occupy an outpost position at Schwabwiller and Betschdorf, to guard against any attacks from the Hagenau forest; the Cavalry Brigade, having been placed under the orders of the general commanding the Eleventh Corps, ultimately took up a position at Gunstett.

Werder's  
Corps  
(Wurtem-  
burg and  
Baden  
Divisions).

Second  
Brigade  
(Wurtem-  
berg).

A portion of the Second Brigade were moving on Gunstett; the remainder, being detained at Surburg, did not reach the field between Westerholz and the Sauer until 2 p.m.

Third  
Brigade  
and

The Third Brigade was ordered to Dieffenbach, and this movement was joined by the reserve artillery.

Reserve  
Artillery.

The Baden Division was ordered to hold itself in readiness at Hohwiller.

Baden  
Division.

Fourth  
Cavalry  
Division.

The Fourth Cavalry Division was to remain in its bivouac at Schonenburg.

### *The Battle from 1 p.m. under the Crown Prince.*

Situation  
of the  
Germans  
at 1 p.m.

The general situation of the Germans at the time when the Crown Prince undertook the personal conduct of the battle was briefly as follows:—

Right.

The advance of the Fourth Bavarian Division against the French left flank had been resumed. The Fifth Bavarian Division was sufficiently advanced for its leading brigade to come up in line, and connect with the Fifth Corps, and the Third Bavarian Division might shortly be expected. In the centre the entire ~~First~~ Corps was assembled opposite Woerth, with its advanced troops thrown across the Sauer.

Centre.

Left.

On the left the Eleventh Corps was collected about Gunstett and Spachbach; and in rear of it a considerable portion of the Wurtembergers might shortly be expected.

In rear of this line, two and a quarter miles in extent from Goersdorf to Gunstett, there were no reserves; but an artillery force of 200 guns, and the entire strength of the Fifth Corps were sufficient to hold the enemy in check, while a *double flank attack* was being developed. During the afternoon a force of 30,000 to 40,000 men would be operating against *each* flank, while

the French at the outside could not have more than 60,000 men.

Accordingly, the Crown Prince issued the following order :—" The Second Bavarian Corps will press upon the left flank of the enemy, in such a manner as to gain a position in rear of it, towards Reichshoffen. The First Bavarian Corps will enter into line as rapidly as possible, between the Second Bavarian and Fifth Corps, holding a division in reserve. The Eleventh Corps will advance with energy *via* Elsasshausen and past the Niederwald upon Froeschwiller. Of Werder's Corps, the Wurtemberg Division will follow the Eleventh Corps on Gunstett and over the Sauer; the Baden Division will move for the present as far as Surburg." Orders of the Crown Prince.

These orders were communicated to the Fifth Corps, with instructions to delay the attack, as the First Bavarian and Eleventh Corps could not be expected to co-operate for one or two hours, and Werder's Corps not for three.

*Storming of the Heights between Woerth and Froeschwiller  
by Fifth Army Corps, 1.30 p.m.*

By this time the whole of the infantry of the Tenth Division was in the foremost fighting line at Woerth, and the Ninth Division had been ordered up, to be ready for any eventuality. The Seventeenth Brigade was now ordered to advance by Woerth, and the Eighteenth Brigade by Spachbach across the Sauer. 1.30 p.m.

The advance of the Seventeenth Brigade had been covered by sending on towards the Sauer the 5th Rifle Battalion, the fourth company of which now joined its brigade, the remaining three crossed at Goersdorf, and combined with the Bavarian detachments in the attacks Advance of the Seventeenth Brigade through Woerth.



on the French position opposite that place, one company remaining in reserve at the Old Mill.

Meanwhile the advance of the main body through Woerth met with frequent obstructions, and at first only two battalions could be established on the right bank at the north-west issue of the town.

Advance  
of the  
Eight-  
teenth  
Brigade at  
Spach-  
bach.

The two battalions of the 50th Regiment which had been maintaining themselves with difficulty in the cutting on the high-road opposite Spachbach were now to be reinforced; the 47th Regiment led the advance across the Sauer, and, leaving one battalion in reserve, succeeded in maintaining their ground on the further side, against repeated attacks of the enemy, though it taxed their strength and endurance to the utmost. In this struggle both regiments lost their commanders. Other battalions of the Eighteenth Brigade now advanced, as also the 2nd battalion of the 50th Regiment, and after a severe struggle Galgen Hill (687) was captured and obstinately held. The 1st Horse Artillery Battery of the Eleventh Corps shortly after came into action on this hill, and opened fire upon Elsasshausen.

Establish-  
ment of  
German  
artillery  
on height  
(687).

Reserves  
brought  
into  
fighting  
line.

The First Bavarian Division had now advanced into the fighting line, and General von Kirchbach therefore determined to lead forward the whole of his troops on the western bank to the attack of the heights.

2 p.m.

A fresh forward movement of the French upon Woerth having just been repulsed, the opportunity was seized for a general advance of the Fifth Corps against the heights. The hop plantations at the north-east issue of the town were carried with a rush by the 58th Regiment; after a brief skirmish the companies charged across the open meadows in company columns, and a footing was gained on the end of the eminence to the north-west; at the same time five battalions of the

Advance  
of the  
Seven-  
teenth and  
Nine-  
teenth  
Brigades  
against the  
heights  
above  
Woerth.

Nineteenth Brigade carried on the movement across the Froeschwiller highroad.

No further ground could be gained, however, on the heights, under the hot fire of the French, who were well posted behind fences and shelter trenches, until Colonel von der Esch created a diversion on the right with the fusilier battalion on the 46th Regiment, driving in the skirmishers who lined the slopes, and reaching the heights almost simultaneously with them. This battalion was immediately received by a murderous fire from two half-moon shaped breastworks. The breastworks were, however, promptly stormed and carried at the point of the bayonet; this gallant battalion maintaining itself in the works, as well as on the edge of the heights, under a heavy musketry and mitrailleuse fire from the edge of the opposite woods, which stopped all further advance or pursuit.

Simultaneously with these successes, the repeated attacks of the French on the south-western issue of Woerth had been repulsed, and finally, by a combined movement of all the troops engaged at that point, the heights projecting to the south-east were carried.

The attack on the highroad in the centre was equally successful, and the whole upper edge of the vineyard overhanging Woerth was now occupied by Prussian skirmishers.

It was now necessary for the Germans, in order to maintain their position, to re-open fire from the guns which had been masked by the infantry attack. The batteries of the Tenth Division and half the corps artillery now crossed the Woerth Bridge, while the artillery of the Ninth Division with the two horse artillery batteries of the First Bavarian Corps advanced to the Woerth-Goersdorf road.

The whole of the infantry of the Fifth Corps on the

Absorption of the last reserves into the fighting line.

left bank was now brought forward, even the pontoon company being sent to support the fighting line in the vineyards.

Thus the whole of the troops of the Fifth Corps were employed in gaining a footing on the west bank of the Sauer, and in occupying the enemy in front until the expected double flank attack could be developed. The struggle had hitherto consisted of a series of offensive movements on both sides, and it was with the greatest difficulty and with enormous losses that the assailants had succeeded in gaining any ground, while the defenders had, generally speaking, held their position.

Flank movement of Eleventh Corps.

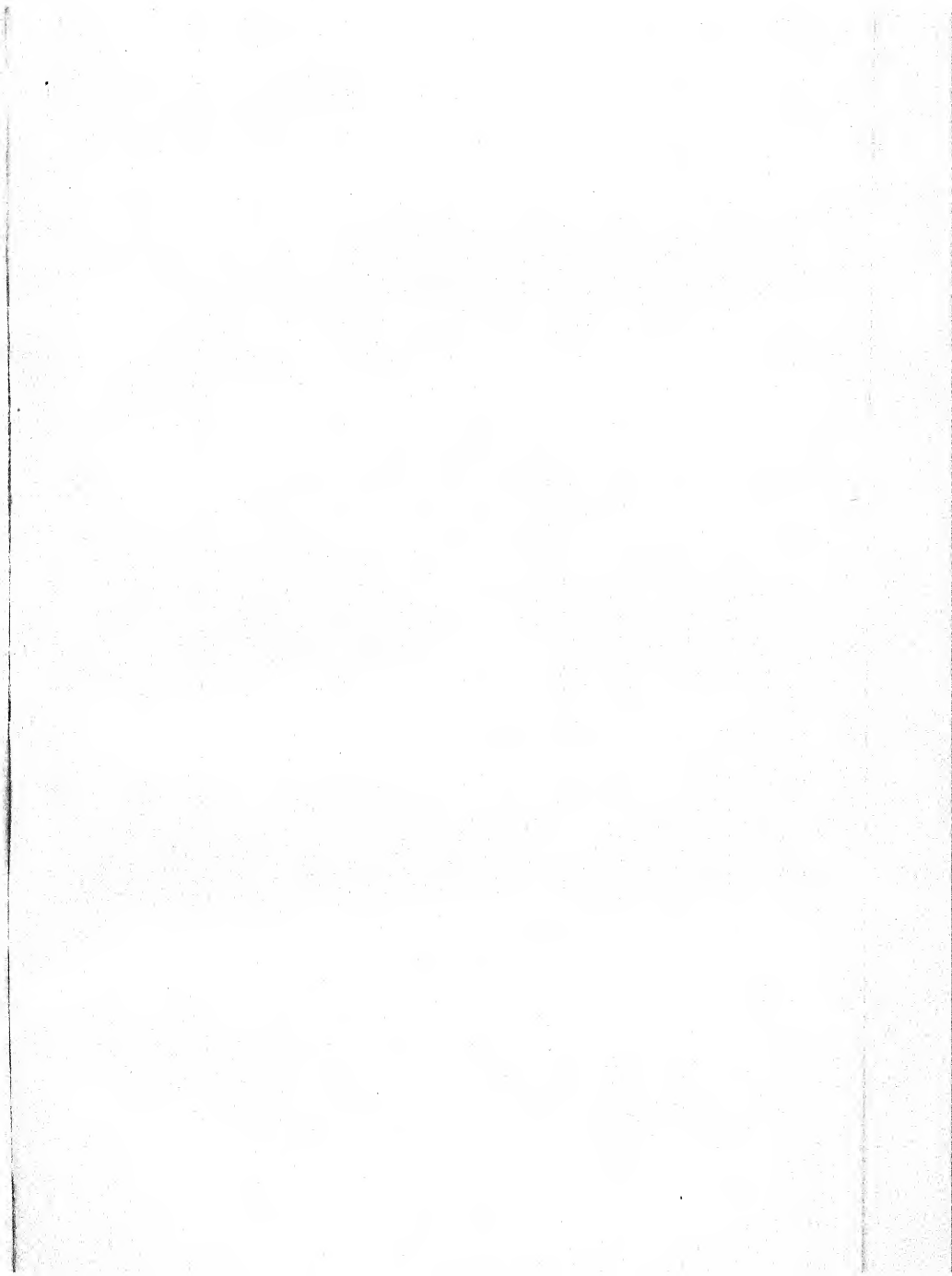
On the left flank of the German attack the troops who were advancing from Spachbach, after gaining a footing in the edge of the wood between the Niederwald and Elsasshausen, had been unable to advance any further. The attack from Gunstett, however, took possession of the Hagenau road at the first rush ; further advance was rendered difficult by the enemy's fire down the open slopes, and the obstinate defence of the Albrechtshauserhof. Meanwhile the left wing succeeded in gaining the cover of the hop plantations on the Morsbronn-Froeschwiller road and bringing a flank fire to bear on the Albrechtshauserhof. The French, however, did not evacuate the building until it was set on fire by the Prussian shells.

Capture of the Albrechtshauserhof.

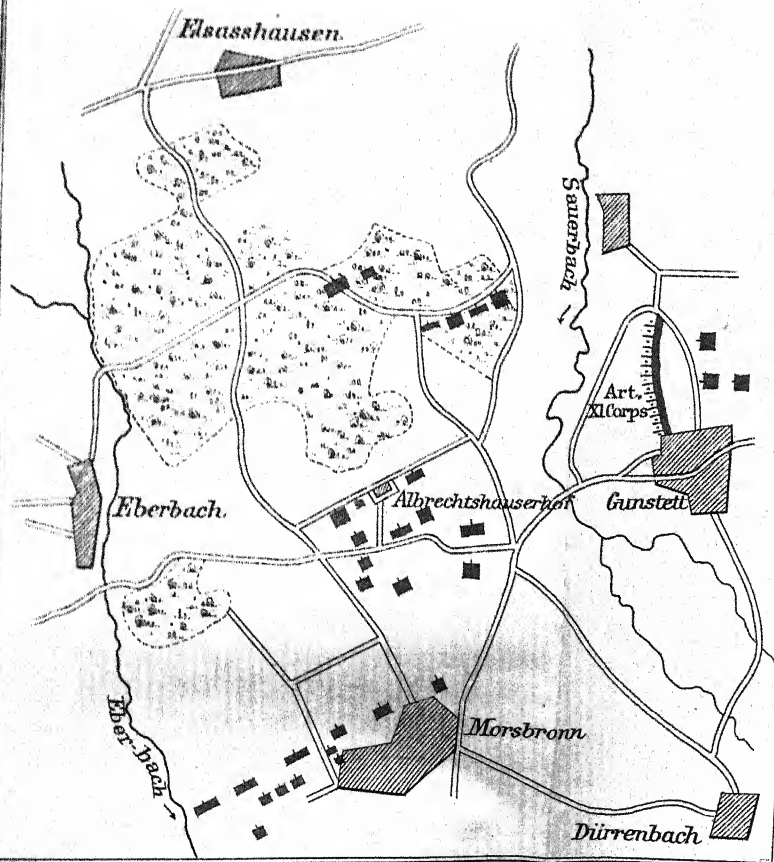
Capture of Morsbronn.

On the *extreme* left, the village of Morsbronn was attacked from the Bruch Mill and Biblisheim ; it was weakly held, and easily carried at the first rush.

The next step, after gaining these first important points of support, was to prepare a combined movement against the Niederwald. The troops at Morsbronn were just preparing to wheel forward to the right, when they were attacked by the French Cuirassier Brigade from the neighbourhood of Eberbach.



ATTACK UPON THE  
NIEDERWALD  
BY XII<sup>TH</sup> CORPS.



General Lartigue, commanding the division on the French right flank, seeing that any further advance of the Prussians from Morsbronn must of necessity jeopardize the position before Woerth, now ordered that a regiment of Cuirassiers should advance from Eberbach and charge the enemy's left flank. A considerably more extensive movement than was contemplated ensued on the issue of this order; the 8th and 9th Cuirassiers, as well as part of the 6th Lancers, were sent forward to the attack. The devoted band came almost immediately under fire from the Albrechtshauserhof, the 8th Cuirassiers in first line, and was received with a deadly fire from the troops forming in front of Morsbronn; the gallant 8th Regiment, undeterred by the leaden hail, which was fast thinning their ranks, charged round the right and left of the Prussian infantry, and sweeping on, fell foul of the 80th Regiment in the streets of Morsbronn. The 9th Cuirassiers fared no better, and the Lancers, forming the last line, also suffered heavy losses. The scattered remnant fell in with the 13th Prussian Hussars, on their retreat by Walburg, and few of them ever found their way back again within the French lines.

The chivalrous advance of the French cavalry had enabled the infantry of the extreme right wing to retire to Eberbach and the contiguous portion of the Niederwald, and reform unmolested.

Meanwhile the French had made a counter-attack on the Albrechtshauserhof and driven back the Prussians, until the latter, being reinforced by the reserves from Gunstett, and in their retreat having unmasked their batteries at that place, were enabled to make a stand.

The attack on the south-east corner of the Niederwald was now renewed with vigour by the Prussians; the heights to the north-east of the Albrechtshauserhof

Charge of  
Michel's  
Cuirassier  
Brigade.

With-  
drawal of  
French  
right.

Attack of  
the French  
on the  
Albrechts-  
hauserhof.

Renewal  
of Prus-  
sian attack  
on the

Niederwald, and recapture of the Albrechts-hauserhof. were recaptured, and another counter-attack on the part of the French, was, after a sharp fight, successfully repulsed. Following up this success, the Prussians gained possession of the southern border of the Niederwald.

Connection had now been established with the Prussian detachment advancing from Morsbronn.

On the approach and attempted outflanking movement of the Prussian extreme left, the French at Eberbach retired to an eminence to the north-west of that place, and maintained themselves so strongly, that the Prussians, after entering the village, found it impossible to issue from the further side of it, until the withdrawal of the French defenders in the skirt of the Niederwald necessitated a corresponding movement to the north on the part of the troops who had been lately defending Eberbach.

Combined movement against Elsasshausen.

The French right wing having thus been thrown back into the Niederwald, the attack upon Elsasshausen, in combination with the attack of the Fifth Corps upon Froeschwiller (according to the instructions of the Crown Prince, which had meanwhile arrived), had now to be considered. In order to insure its success, General von Bose did not hesitate to employ his *whole* force, and gave orders for the artillery and the three battalions still in reserve at Gunstett, to be brought up.

Continuation of fighting in the Niederwald.

Meanwhile, the foremost fighting line had penetrated into the Niederwald; the extreme left, at the same time advancing from Eberbach to the evacuated heights on the north-west, and continuing its advance towards the Froeschwiller-Reichshoffen highroad, while a cavalry regiment reconnoitred further to the left. Ground was slowly gained in the Niederwald, until at last the northern edge was reached; here there was a clear space, two hundred yards wide, dividing the northern edge of the Niederwald from the copse occupied by

the French; it was at this point that the attack from Spachbach had been brought to a stand. Between this copse and Elsasshausen were posted strong reserves. The French did not wait to be attacked, but dashed across the open space, and drove back the first line of the Prussians. Their success, however, was brief, for the advancing troops of the Prussians quickly came up to the support of the shattered first line, and driving back the French, crossed the open space and entered the copse simultaneously with them.

Counter-attack by the French on the Niederwald.

The French right wing was now driven back to Elsasshausen, and the Prussians were immediately in front of the position at that point. The village was strongly occupied, several batteries being posted on the heights to the west, while strong reserves were visible in rear of it.

French position at Elsasshausen.

The French artillery at Elsasshausen were in the meantime playing so effectively on the captors of the Niederwald, that immediate advance or retreat were the only alternatives. General von Bose had already brought up his nearest batteries, and very shortly a line of seven batteries was in action against the French artillery and the village. These Prussian batteries were much exposed to close infantry fire from the Woerth-Gundershoffen road, which at this point went through a cutting. The village was set on fire, but the defenders still held out. On a signal, "the whole will advance," a dash was made on the village, some detachments of the Fifth Corps taking part in the attack. The village was carried, and the troops, now in utter disorder, had to be reformed by their officers.

Establishment of Prussian batteries.

Capture of Elsasshausen.

The Prussian artillery was now brought forward, and two horse artillery batteries unlimbered within two thousand paces of Froeschwiller. A general forward movement in some disorder was commenced against



Froeschwiller, but was speedily checked by a vigorous counter-stroke on the part of the French, which drove the captors of Elsasshausen back to the shelter of the Niederwald. The attack of a Prussian regiment (94th) however, on the right flank of the French, and the fire of two batteries brought the counter-attack to a standstill; the retreating Prussian detachments were reformed, and the counter-attack of the French upon Elsasshausen was beaten off.

Bonne-  
main's  
cavalry  
charge.

Bonnemain's cavalry, consisting of four regiments of Cuirassiers, had moved into a fold of the ground behind Elsasshausen, and now proceeded to charge the Prussian infantry, who, in their pursuit of the retreating French, had reached the high ground between Elsasshausen and Froeschwiller, while seven batteries were established on either side of the former village.

The ground was badly adapted for cavalry, and covered with stumps of trees five feet high; the Prussian infantry was nearly reformed, and, taking advantage of the cover afforded by the fences of the hop plantations, it succeeded in inflicting the most fearful losses on the cuirassier regiments as they came up in succession: these latter were compelled to take to flight in every direction.

Arrival of  
Second  
Wurtem-  
burg  
Brigade  
and First  
Bavarian  
Division.  
3 p.m.

Soon after the failure of the French attack on Elsasshausen, the Second Wurtemberg Brigade reached that place. Meanwhile the First Bavarian Division had come up into line.

German  
attack on  
right of  
Froesch-  
willer.

At 3 p.m. the First Bavarian Division, three battalions of the Bavarian Corps, and one and a half battalions from the Fifth Corps, had succeeded in establishing themselves on the right attack against Froeschwiller. Owing, however, to some of the leading German battalions being accidentally fired into by their own troops, a retreat took place towards the saw-mill; the French left their strong position in pursuit, but the German troops were quickly

rallied, and with the help of some fresh battalions, the contest on the edge of the Froeschwiller heights was re-established, and the enemy driven back on his entrenchments.

Soon after 3.30 p.m. ground was visibly gained on 3.30 p.m. the plateau. Reserves were brought up from Goersdorf, and after severe fighting the shelter trenches were stormed, and the Seventeenth Brigade were once more united with the Fifth Corps.

Thus, between three and four o'clock, an enveloping attack was established round Froeschwiller, from Neehwiller to Eberbach, and simultaneously, from south, east, and north, the German troops rushed upon the common goal. Storming of Froeschwiller.

Two batteries of the Fifth Corps had advanced beyond the line of skirmishers, within *case* range of the village, and maintained their fire steadily both upon it and the road, in spite of heavy losses from the enemy's projectiles. One of these batteries (3rd Horse Artillery) repulsed single-handed a cavalry attack launched against it. Preparation of the attack by the artillery.

After a desperate struggle in the streets, the French fled in disorder along the Reichshoffen and Niederbronn roads, and by five o'clock in the afternoon the German victory was complete. The French right wing fled towards Hagenau. Thus MacMahon's army was completely scattered and broken up into two distinct parties of fugitives. Street fighting.

The Fourth Prussian Cavalry Division being still a long way in the rear, there were only the four regiments of divisional cavalry, and two regiments of the Wurtemberg Cavalry Brigade available for the pursuit. The pursuit.

The 14th Hussars and the 14th Dragoons, with two Wurtemberg regiments, undertook the pursuit in the Reichshoffen direction, capturing several guns and large numbers of prisoners. The pursuit could not, however,

be carried beyond Reichshoffen in this direction, owing to the opportune arrival of the Division Lespart of the French Fifth Corps from Bitsch, which covered the retreat of the flying First Corps. MacMahon succeeded in rallying the centre and left at Niederbronn, but the *débris* of the right continued to flee in complete panic to Hagenau, from whence they were forwarded by rail to Strasburg, where their appearance produced the utmost consternation.

Numbers  
engaged,  
and losses  
on either  
side.

In this battle the French force actually engaged amounted to 40,000 men, while the Germans numbered 90,000. We must also take into consideration the fact that the presence of the First Bavarian Corps on the field enabled the Prussian Fifth Corps to act with far more vigour and boldness than it would otherwise have been able to do; so that, although the First Bavarian Corps was not actually engaged, it yet contributed most materially to the triumph of the German arms upon this day.

The Crown Prince's army lost upon this day nearly 8000 killed and wounded; the French, though not suffering so heavily in killed and wounded, lost 6000 unwounded prisoners.

### *Summary.*

The success of the Crown Prince at Woerth on the 6th of August was, curiously enough, coincident with the victory achieved by the troops of the First and Second Armies at Spicheren.

The results of the Battle of Woerth were of such an important nature, that it is hardly possible to over-estimate their value to the German cause. These results may be briefly considered under three heads—political, moral, and strategical.

With reference to the first, we need say little ; suffice it to mention that Paris was thrown into a state of mingled rage and consternation, and that the Emperor was obliged to resign the command of the army.

The moral effect was such that, as we have seen, 6000 *unwounded prisoners* were taken, and MacMahon was unable to rally his troops for several days, not even attempting to dispute the passage of the Moselle, so completely demoralized were they. Moreover, a portion of his army was separated from the main body and unable to rejoin it.

The strategical results were of such a nature that they were felt during the entire war. MacMahon's army was, for the remainder of the operations, completely isolated ; there was thus not only no connecting link between the troops at Strasburg and those around Metz, but neither was it any longer possible for MacMahon to co-operate with Bazaine. Woerth was the key of the advanced French position, and the victory of the Germans enabled them to march through the difficult passes of the Vosges without hindrance, and, in fact, to continue their invasion of French soil until the crowning victory of Sedan put the whole country between that place and Paris at the mercy of the invaders.

The Battle of Woerth, like that of Spicheren, was fought a day earlier than was intended by the respective commanders-in-chief, owing to the somewhat precipitate action of the commanders of the advanced troops. The immediate results of thus hastily entering into an important engagement like that of Woerth, before the arrangements of the Commander-in-Chief could possibly be completed, may be briefly summarized by saying that it entailed upon the German Fifth Corps a most unnecessarily heavy loss ; it caused the orders and counter-orders which threw the Second Bavarian Corps out of

action, and subsequently required the troops of that corps to fight again for the already hard-won vantage-ground which had been earned step by step that morning; and, finally, it entirely prohibited a pursuit on the scale required. If the Battle of Woerth had been fought on the day fixed upon by the Crown Prince (7th), in all human probability MacMahon's army would have ceased to play any part in the subsequent operations, as it is only fair to suppose that since, under the existing circumstances, the Germans were successful in capturing 6000 prisoners; they would have been quite equal to the task of capturing fully five times that number, had the pursuit been organized as it could have been, if the concentration of the Third Army contemplated by the Crown Prince for that day had been completed.

### *Comments.*

MacMahon's determination to hold the position at Woerth.

The strategical importance of Woerth is only equalled by its tactical strength for fighting a defensive action such as MacMahon contemplated; and when we consider the immense value of the position from both points of view, we cannot wonder at a daring leader like MacMahon being tempted to give battle there. We cannot, however, acquit him from the charge of rashness, when we remember that, though his position was strong in front, there was a defile of the most dangerous description behind—retreat through the passes of the Vosges could mean nothing short of disaster; and the French force was too weak to hope for a *victory*—a partial triumph in the nature of a successful rear-guard action was all that MacMahon could expect in contending against the vastly numerical superiority of the Germans.

German

The German double flank attack was well planned

and most ably executed ; the Fifth Corps behaving most admirably under the very trying rôle of withstanding the whole fury of the French counter-attacks while the double flank movement was being developed. It is also highly creditable to the Germans that in such a densely wooded country they should have succeeded in *keeping touch* throughout the line, and that when the crisis arrived at Froeschwiller, the attack was delivered almost simultaneously from south, east, and north.

The French, on their side, showed a thorough appreciation of the strength of their position, and improved it as much as possible by artificial means, in the shape of entrenchments and obstacles. They seemed to be perfectly aware of the great principle that a purely passive defence is no defence at all ; and their daring counter-strokes, from the beginning to the end of the day, conducted with equal vigour and prudence—with the one exception of the disastrous cavalry charge on their right—call for our highest admiration.

We need scarcely be surprised at the state of utter disorganization and panic which ensued upon the fall of Froeschwiller. Every man in the French Army had fought throughout the day with the most desperate valour ; the enemy had undoubtedly suffered far more severely than the defenders ; and yet fresh troops came pouring in to aid the attack, with unabated energy, and the most desperate determination to win the position. There seemed no end to the numbers or the unflinching courage of the assailants. No wonder, then, that the French, feeling that they had done their utmost, and all in vain, should be seized with panic, and "*Sauve qui peut*" should become the password in every one's mouth.

The battle of Woerth is one of many battles which show how thoroughly the Germans understood how to handle their artillery ; how, in the first instance, to take

up good positions, concentrating the fire of massed batteries upon one point at a time, to prepare the way for the infantry advance ; how to be in readiness to open fire immediately upon any counter-stroke of the enemy ; and how, when the time came to push forward, they were ready at all hazards to advance boldly into, and even in front of, the fighting line.

The  
French  
artillery.

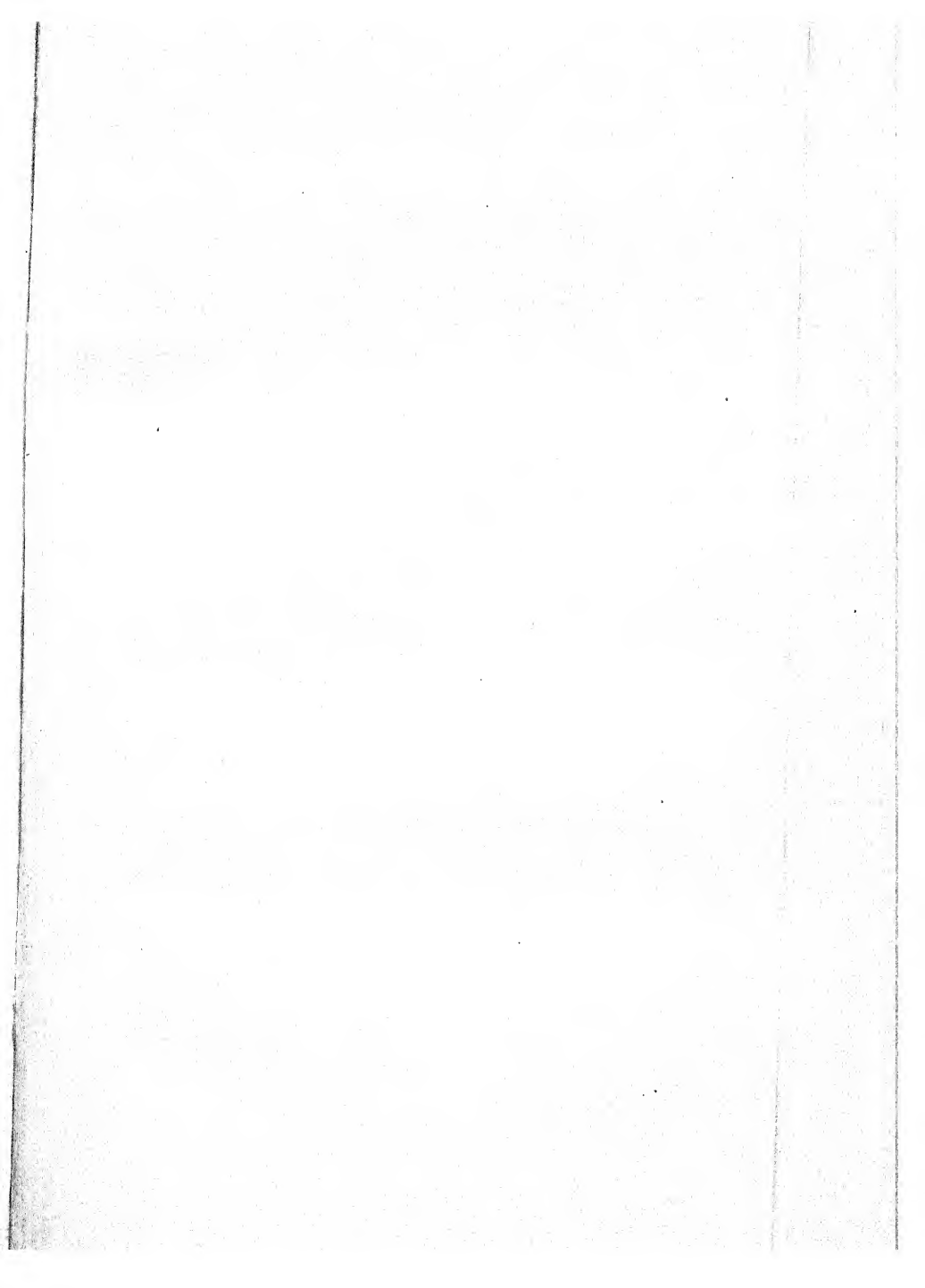
The French artillery was not handled well in this battle, and did comparatively little execution ; in many instances the shells did not burst, and the range was very seldom judged with any accuracy. The mitrailleuse batteries, of which such great things had been expected, were badly posted and easily put out of action by the German field guns ; in fact, the new invention had been kept such a profound secret, that the officers in charge of the mitrailleuse batteries seem not to have understood the purposes to which the new machine gun was applicable ; and in pitting it against the German field gun at long ranges, simply courted failure.

*Points  
d'appui.*

This battle affords several instances of tactical points in the field, which formed centres of the most obstinate fighting. We may instance the Bruch Mill, the projecting corner of the Niederwald, the Albrechtshauserhof, and the town of Woerth itself as remarkable cases. On both sides a keen appreciation of the value of these points was shown ; the defence of the Albrechtshauserhof by the French for some time after it had been set on fire by the German shells, and that of the Germans in the Bruch Mill under equally trying circumstances, are good examples.

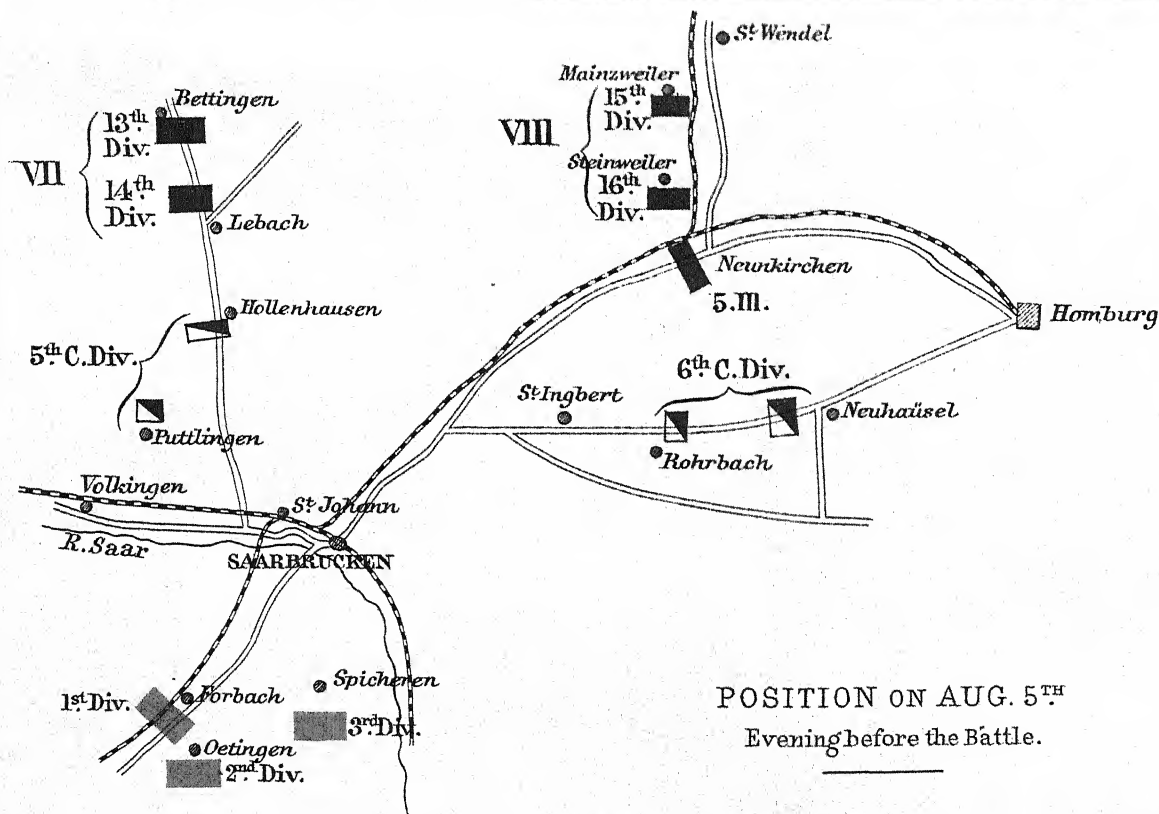
Offensive  
and  
defensive.

It would appear reasonable to conclude, from the history of this battle and a consideration of the numbers engaged, that a force acting on the defensive in a *strong* position ought to be able to hold that position against an enemy of double their strength. This reasoning,





Sketch VII (face page 45.)



Edw. Weller, lith.

London: Kegan Paul, Trench &amp; Co.

however, could only be applied to a large force, such as the French had at Woerth. It will be remembered that the Germans had considerably more than double the numbers of the French at their disposal on the day of Woerth. (See Gravelotte.)

## BATTLE OF SPICHEREN, AUGUST 6.

ON the evening of the 5th of August, the French Second Corps held a strong position at Forbach and Spicheren, as an outpost to the main body under Bazaine. The position of the most advanced troops of the First and Second German Armies is shown in the accompanying sketch—

### *Germanis.*

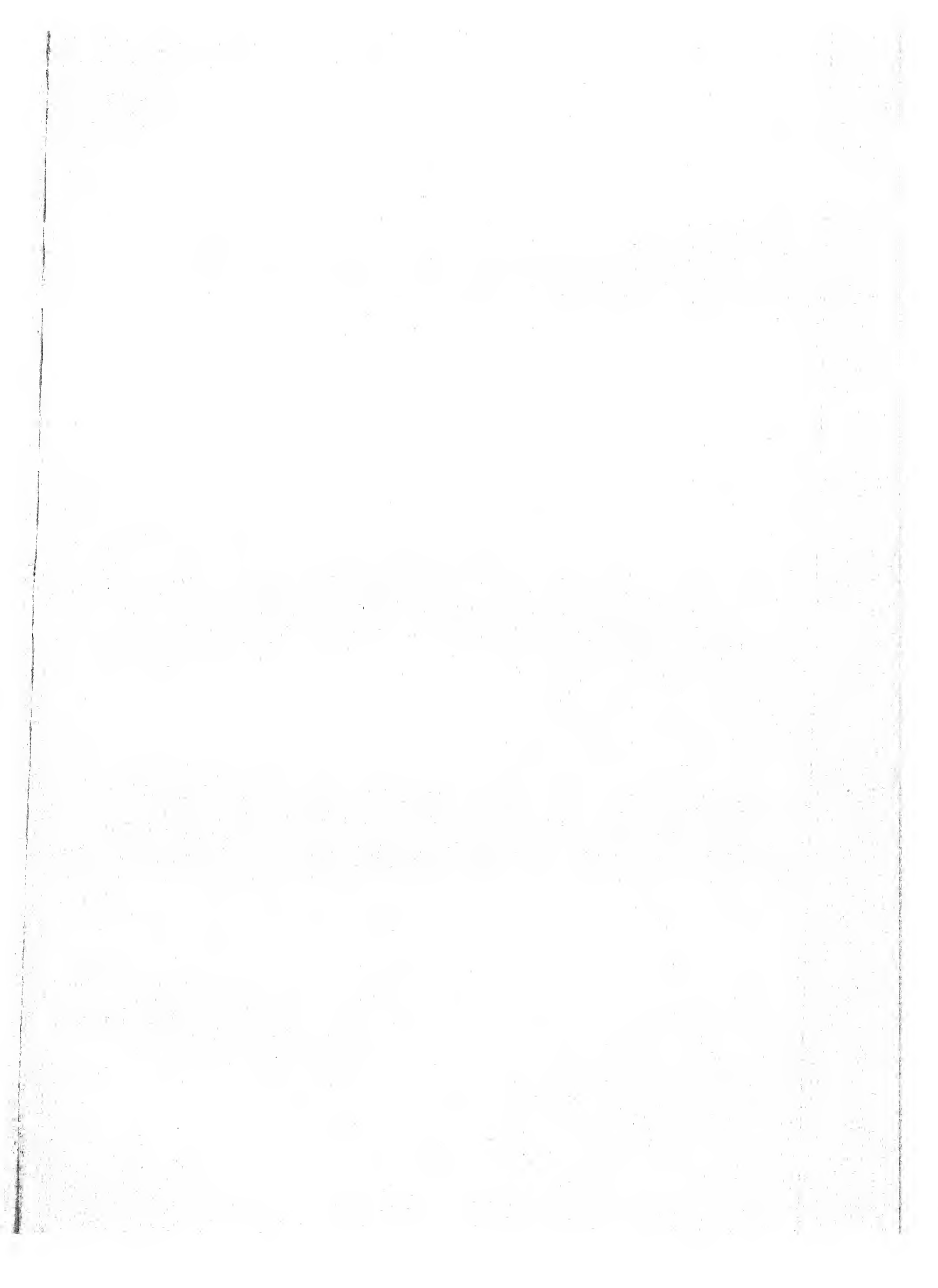
First Army	Seventh Corps	Thirteenth Division at Bettingen.
		Fourteenth     "     "     Lebach.
	Eighth Corps	Fifteenth       "       "     Mainzweiler.
		Sixteenth       "       "     Steinweiler.
Second Army	Third Corps	Fifth Division at Neunkirchen.
	Cavalry	Fifth Cavalry Division at Hollenhausen and Puttlingen.
		Sixth Cavalry Division at Rohrbach and Neuhäusel.

### *French.*

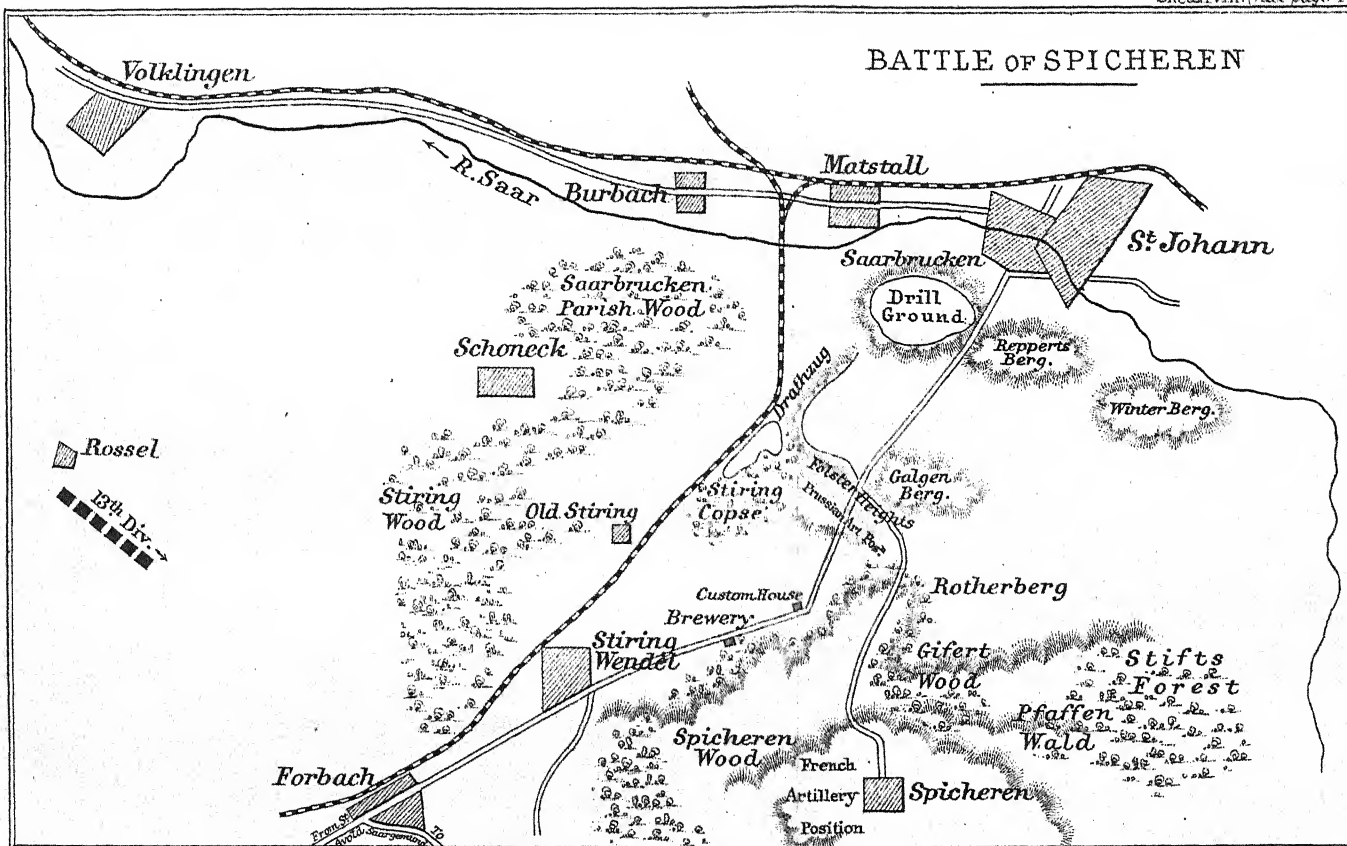
Second Corps (Frossard)	{	First Division (Vergé) at Forbach and Stiring-wendal.
		Second Division (Bataille) at Oetingen.
		Third           "     (Laveaucoupet) at Spicheren.

Description of the field.

The position occupied by Frossard, with his corps of 30,000 men and 90 guns, extended from the Saar, south of St. Arnual, as far as the railway between Stiring Wendel and Forbach; the greater part of the position being on the Spicheren heights.



Sketch VIII. (face page 47)



The northern slopes of these heights are steep and thickly wooded, rising in successive terraces above the heights of the Winterberg, Reppertsberg, Galgenberg, etc. The rocky escarpments of the Spicheren heights give great security from assault, and a view is obtained from them right away to the Saar. The steep slopes cannot be commanded by fire from the crest, owing partly to the precipitous nature of the declivity in front of the position, and partly to the dense woods which cover the hill sides. To the west of the Spicheren heights is a deep valley, in which runs a road and railway from Forbach to Saarbrücken, south-west to north-east.

These natural defences had been strengthened by the construction of shelter trenches and gun-pits. The Rotherberg projected like a spur from the general line of the French position, flanking all the lines of approach.

There were three bridges over the Saar in front of the French position: viz. the railway bridge near Mattstall, and the bridges of Saarbrücken and St. Johann.

On the morning of the 6th of August, various recon-  
naissances had been made by the Fifth and Sixth Advance  
of the  
Germans. Cavalry Division, until General von Rheinbaben occupied the Drill Ground, and telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army that the French had withdrawn from their positions, and subsequently a second telegram to the effect that the French were occupying the heights north of Forbach, and that the advance guard of the Fourteenth Division (German) had arrived at Saarbrücken.

The Fourteenth Division was on its march from Lebach, when the officer commanding heard that the enemy had abandoned his positions, and asked permission to occupy them. He was told to act on his own responsibility.

The advance guard of the Fourteenth Division (one squadron, three battalions, one battery, one company pioneers) crossed the Saar and occupied the Drill Ground at 11.30 a.m.

At noon Prince Frederick Charles received Rhein-baben's telegrams at Homburg, and as it appeared that the First Army was on the line of march of the Second Army, he ordered the officer commanding the Third Corps to occupy Saarbrücken at once. In the meantime, however, General von Doering, commanding the Ninth Brigade, thinking that the Fourteenth Division would need support, had already moved on Saarbrücken.

At the same time, General von Barnekow, commanding Sixteenth Division, hearing the cannonade increase, resumed his march from Fischbach where he had just halted, and made for St. Johann.

Between 12 a.m. and 1 p.m. General von Zastrow, commanding the Eighth Corps, having received reports to the effect that the French were advancing, ordered the Thirteenth Division to push forward to Forbach *via* Völklingen and Rossel, and the Fourteenth Division to take up a position at Saarbrücken, and patrol as far as Forbach.

The Fourteenth Division crossed at Saarbrücken, and as the ground in possession of the Germans could be overlooked from the French positions, and the range of hills on the left bank of the Saar ran close up to the river, also inasmuch as the French did not appear to be in any force, Kameke, commanding the division, ordered General von François to drive the French artillery off the Rotherberg.

This action on the part of General von Kameke, practically committed the Germans to a battle. The advance was made. Upon the Twenty-seventh Brigade

reaching the Stiffts and Gifert Wald, the French camp at Spicheren was sighted.

At 2.30 p.m. this brigade reached the southern edge of the Gifert Wald; at the same time, the right wing occupied Drathzug.

This advance on both flanks of the French line, was opposed by Jolivet's Brigade (Second), First Division on the left, and Laveaucoupet's Division (Third) on the right.

Between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Jolivet succeeded in forcing back the German right. Supports were sent up to the hard-pressed Twenty-seventh Brigade on the right, and at 3 p.m., after some severe fighting, the Germans were masters of the south-western edge of the Stiring copse.

About the same time, the advanced guard battery of the Fourteenth (German) Division moved to the north-east of Drathzug, while the three batteries of the main body of the Twenty-seventh Brigade, having arrived on the Reppertsberg, moved to the Winterberg, and opened fire on the Rotherberg.

Soon after 1 p.m. General von François had led forward the remainder of the Twenty-seventh Brigade to storm the Rotherberg; the fire of the French was, however, so severe, that Von François was obliged to halt his force close under the heights, where it was under cover, owing to the dense woods which clothed the steep hill side. The lower edge of these woods was not occupied by the French.

At 3 p.m. the whole of the Twenty-seventh Brigade was attacking the front and flanks of the French position, supported by the fire of four batteries, and on the right flank by the Twenty-eighth Brigade.

On the French side, the whole of Vergé's Division was in action in front of Stiring Wendel, and Laveau-



coupet's Division on the Spicheren heights, while Bataille's Division had reached the Spicheren plateau from Oetingen, one brigade being directed to the support of each flank.

Continuation of the battle after 3 p.m.

As the Twenty-eighth Brigade were evidently gaining ground on the German right, General Kameke ordered Von François to storm the Rotherberg. The attack was gallantly delivered, and the edge of the wood was gained, but at a heavy cost, General von François himself being killed on the crest of the hill. The French, nothing daunted by this bold assault, quickly made a furious counter-attack, in which the 1st Battery of the 39th German Regiment, which had successfully assaulted the Gifert Wald, was driven back from its advanced position towards the Winterberg. The Rotherberg was still held by parts of the 39th and 74th Regiments.

Arrival of General von Goeben.

Meanwhile, General von Goeben, commanding Eighth Corps, had arrived and assumed the command; the advance guard of the Fifth Division (Third Corps) had arrived on the Winterberg; and six batteries of the First Army had also succeeded in taking up a position on the Folster heights, and thence to the Galgenberg.

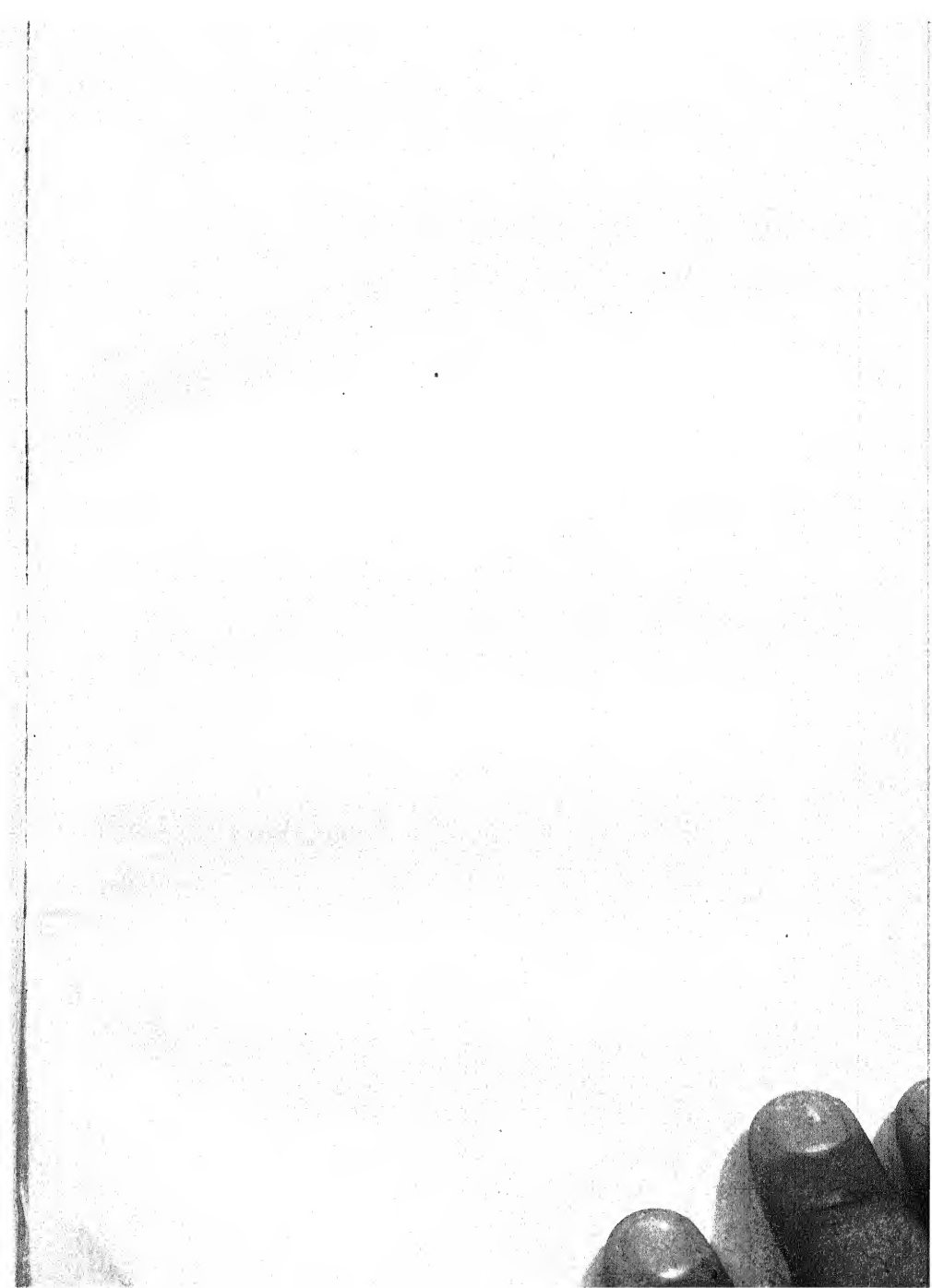
4 p.m.

At 4 p.m. six companies of the Thirty-second Brigade were sent forward to the Rotherberg, and five companies to the Gifert Wald, and offensive measures were actively resumed under cover of the fire from the six batteries on the Folster heights.

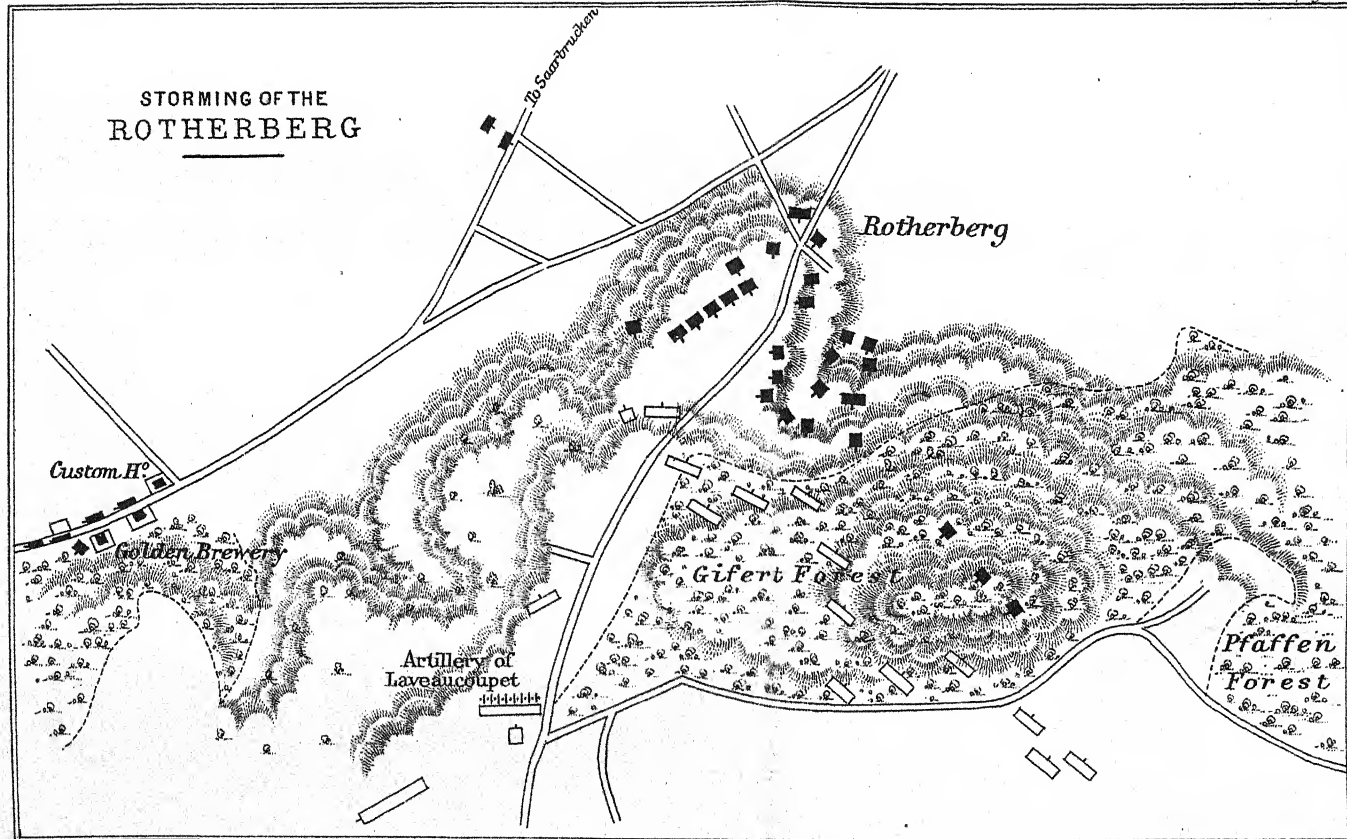
4.30 p.m.

At 4.30 p.m. General von Zastrow, commanding Seventh Corps, arrived and assumed command. The struggle on the Rotherberg, in the Gifert Wald, and Pfaffen Wald was now at its height; the Thirty-second Brigade supporting the remainder of the Twenty-seventh Brigade in its front and flank attack upon the Rotherberg, which was at last carried: the French, however,

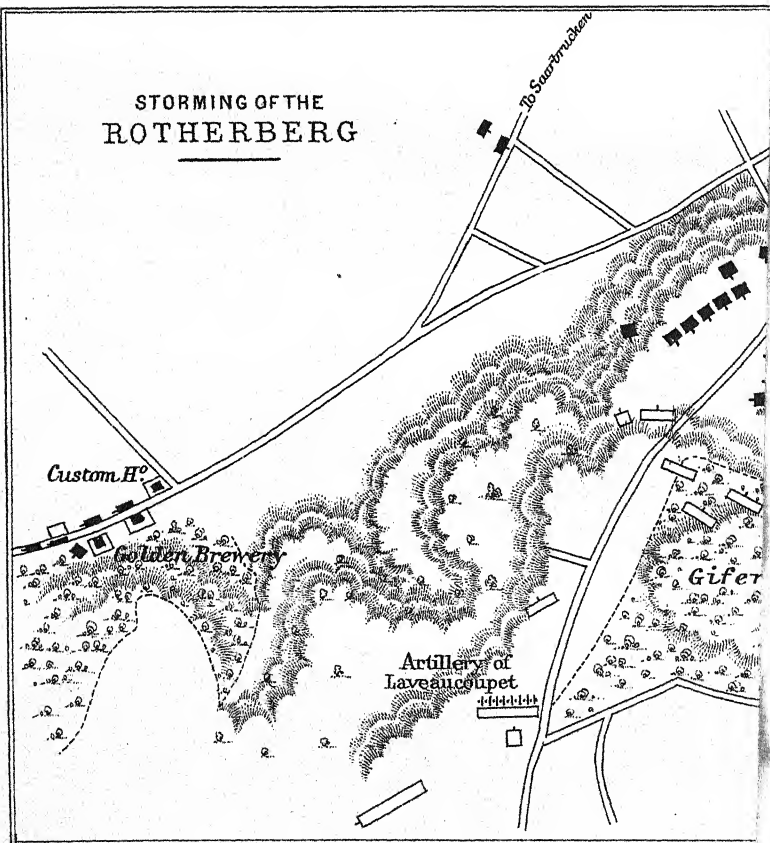
The Rotherberg



# STORMING OF THE ROTHERBERG



# STORMING OF THE ROTHERBERG



London: Kegan Paul, Trenchard

still held on most tenaciously to the western edge of the Gifert Wald. carried  
by the  
Germans.

Meanwhile the Twenty-eighth Brigade had been pushing forward on the right in the Stiring copse. At 4 p.m. the Custom House and Golden Brewery were captured. The French, seeing their left thus threatened, made a vigorous counter-attack, and drove the Germans out of the Stiring copse, but did not succeed in retaking the Custom House and Brewery. German  
right  
attack.

The batteries on the Galgenberg were ordered to join those which had already pushed forward to the Folster heights.

At 5 p.m. the Brunswick Hussars endeavoured to seize the Rotherberg; but this ill-advised attempt was not unnaturally a failure, the nature of the ground, and the confined access to the French position rendering such failure a foregone conclusion. By the most strenuous exertions and determined perseverance, first one and ultimately five more guns, from the two batteries of the Third Corps, were brought up on the heights; two more guns of the 2nd Battery were also got into position by another approach. The French artillery and infantry opened fire upon these guns at a range of eight hundred yards, but the German gunners stuck to their guns in spite of the hail of bullets which swept around them, affording a support to the infantry, of which the latter were now sorely in need. Establish-  
ment of  
German  
artillery  
on the  
Rother-  
berg.

About 7 p.m. the Ninth Brigade (Third Corps) attacked and carried the Spicheren forest. About the same time Laveaucoupet's Division, supported by Bataille's Second Brigade, and the batteries on the Pfaffenberg, made a furious onslaught on the Prussian left, which they succeeded in driving back; further advance, however, was paralyzed by the appearance of the Ninth Brigade from Spicheren forest. At the Attack of  
the Ninth  
Brigade  
on the  
Spicheren  
forest,  
7 p.m.

same hour (7 p.m.) Steinmetz arrived and took command.

German  
attack on  
French  
left, 8.15  
to 8.30.

The attack of the Germans on the French centre and right now became practically stationary. On the French left, however, the attack was pushed on vigorously; and in spite of the most obstinate defence, and several dashing offensive returns, between 8.15 p.m. and 8.30 p.m., Stiring Wendel, the key of the French left, was captured by the Twenty-eighth Brigade, part of the Ninth Brigade, and a light battery of the Fourteenth Division.

The battle was now practically over, though isolated combats did not cease until 11 p.m.

Results.

The Germans can scarcely claim a complete victory at Spicheren, as they did not succeed in forcing the French to evacuate their position, though a partial success was achieved on the French left. During the night, however, Frossard drew off his troops, in consequence of his rear being threatened by the Thirteenth Division advancing from Völklingen and Rossell; and, since no reinforcements had arrived to support him in his advanced position, he undoubtedly adopted the wisest course in retiring.

In this battle the German losses amounted to 4870 killed and wounded; while the French lost 4700 killed and wounded, and 1200 unwounded prisoners.

### *Summary.*

The battle of Spicheren, like the battle of Woerth, was commenced by the precipitate action of commanders of advanced troops, and not in accordance with the preconcerted plans of the Commander-in-Chief. It was, in fact, quite opposed to the general plan of action, which pointed to a general engagement on a large scale with the main body of Bazaine's army, with the idea of

completely crushing his force by one well-considered blow; rather than inflicting upon the French a series of minor defeats, which, while causing heavy losses and vexatious delays, offered no compensating advantage in the form of a really substantial triumph for the German arms.

The battle of Spicheren offers a remarkable instance of the importance of avoiding any action on the part of the advanced troops, which may bring on a general engagement, when the main body is not prepared, and the plans for such an engagement form no part of the Commander-in-Chief's programme. We see throughout the battle of Spicheren the German troops hurried into action as fast as they arrived on the field, irrespective of the division or corps to which they belonged, and irrespective equally of any well-considered plan of battle. It was only owing to the perfect *decentralisation* throughout the German army that such an action as that of Spicheren was possible, without the direst confusion and disaster resulting therefrom. Never, perhaps, has a battle been fought in which the various units of the attacking force have been so inextricably mixed up, in which a strong position has been assailed by a numerically weaker force by the method of a *double flank attack*; and finally, in which that attacking force, despite numerous changes in the supreme command, has consistently carried out the original programme, and at the end of the day been able to claim a distinct triumph for their arms, though not perhaps a complete victory.

The French forces engaged at Spicheren numbered 30,000 men and 90 guns; while the Germans at first had only 12,000 men and 24 guns; these numbers were subsequently augmented to 50,000 men and 120 guns.

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*Comments.*

French  
position.

The French position at Spicheren is so unique in the annals of war that it deserves some notice. In the first place, the only part of the position on the right which permitted the use of artillery against the advancing Prussians was the Rotherberg, and this was so soon exposed to reverse fire from the Prussian batteries, that the attackers were enabled to advance across the plain to close quarters before suffering any loss from artillery fire.

Another peculiarity of the French position was that two-thirds of it was on the heights, and one-third in the valley about Stiring Wendel, some three hundred feet lower down.

The steep hillsides of the Stifts Wald were so thickly wooded that the assailants could advance almost to the crest without being seen; the French having elected not to occupy the lower edge of the wood. The first serious resistance was not therefore encountered until the assailants attempted to emerge from the upper edge of the wood. The French troops which had occupied the slopes, between the upper and lower portions of the position, were gradually drawn off each way, so that when the Germans, who were sent *round* the Rotherberg to climb up the *western* slopes, arrived at that point, they met with but little opposition. The French succeeded throughout the day in maintaining themselves on the plateau; but, as we have seen, were defeated on the plain,—the battle having resolved itself into two perfectly distinct engagements, before Stiring Wendel fell into the hands of the assailants—the fighting in the upper portion of the field being essentially *wood* fighting; while in the lower portion it resolved itself into the defence and attack of buildings and *street* fighting.

The rashness of the Germans in undertaking an enveloping attack with so small a force certainly courted disaster. There were, however, two considerations which prevented Frossard from entering upon any extensive offensive movement—one was, that though reinforcements were actually within reach of the sound of the guns, yet there was not the slightest indication of any assistance coming up; the other was, that the position was one which was eminently unsuited for such offensive movements—the whole field being under the command of the Prussian guns, whereas but little of it could be seen from the French artillery positions.

The battle of Spicheren opens up before us the question of the advantages and disadvantages of taking up a defensive position on a hill. Such positions may be roughly divided into those where the hillsides can be swept by fire from the crest; and those where, either owing to their abnormal steepness or the denseness of wood and undergrowth, the slopes are not under fire from the crest.

In the first case there seems little doubt that the crest line is the one which should be adopted for the main shooting line, and that a second line should be taken up some eight hundred yards or so in rear of the crest according to the requirements on the spot. This is essentially what was done by the French at Spicheren, the village of Spicheren itself forming the reduct of the second line on the plateau.

In the second case, which is the one that the French actually had to deal with, it would appear that the only way to turn such a position to account is to occupy the lower edge of the wood as a first shooting line for skirmishers, and the upper edge as a main fighting line, a second shooting line being prepared eight hundred yards in rear for the final defence. To allow the enemy

Rashness  
of German  
attack.

Defensive  
positions  
on hill-  
sides.

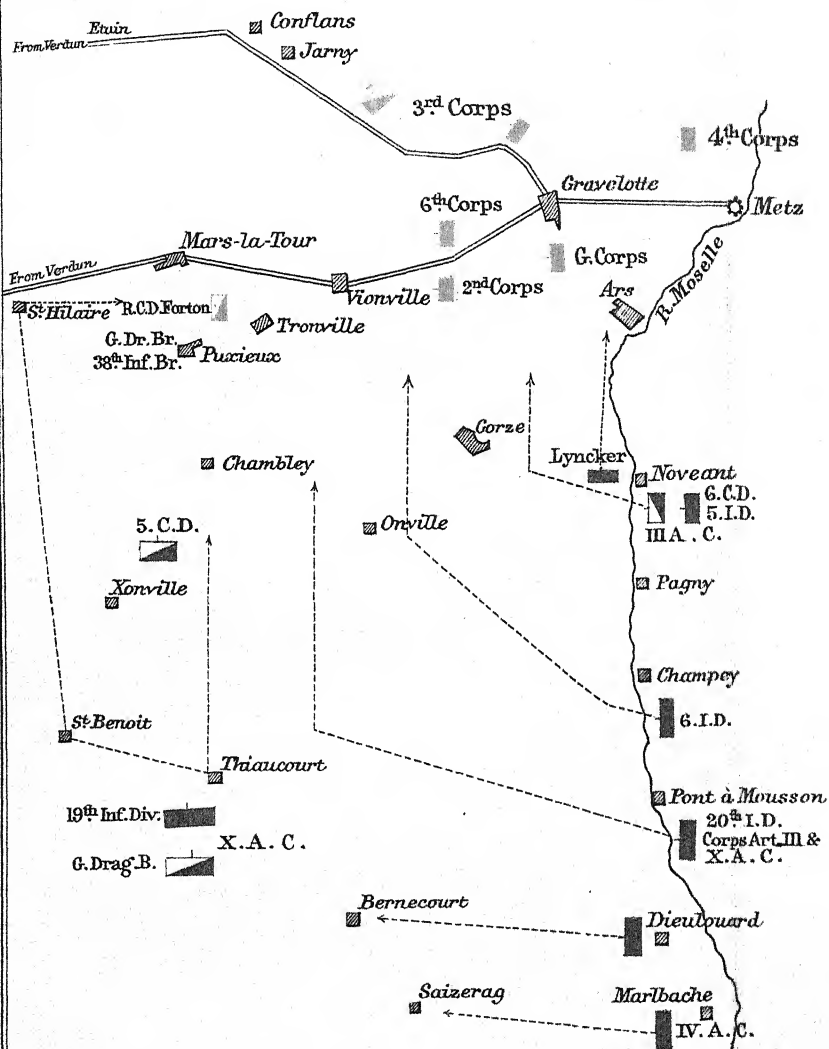
to come up to close quarters without attempting to check him is simply to throw away all advantage which should accrue to the *defence* from the choice of position, and to give it over to the *attack*.

If the slopes, however, are not wooded, but simply owing to their extraordinary steepness cannot be commanded from the crest, then it would be better to avoid the position altogether ; for such positions as these give only a fancied security against attack, opposing nothing but *natural* obstacles to the assailant, which by patience and perseverance may be overcome ; the defenders lose all the advantages which naturally belong to the defence, in the shape of previously selected positions for artillery, which can enable that arm to play an important part in the opening of the engagement ; there can be no judiciously placed shelter trenches in advanced positions ; and no harassing of the enemy by well-planned offensive movements during his advance. In fine, such a position would be shunned by any experienced commander.

Broken  
positions.

This battle gives us an excellent illustration of the danger of a broken position—one portion being on a hill and the remainder in a valley. What occurred at Spichenen is almost certain to occur in any similar position, viz. the troops on the hill *side*, which form the connecting link between those on the top of the hill and those in the valley, are sure to be drawn off to either side. *There is nothing more difficult than to maintain an ill-defined position.*





MARS-LA-TOUR.

Morning of 16<sup>th</sup> Aug.

## BATTLE OF MARS-LA-TOUR, AUGUST 16.

AFTER the well-contested action of Colombey-Nouilly on the 14th of August, in which both French and Germans equally claimed the victory, the Emperor of Germany indicated in his orders for the 15th the immediate objective which the Second Army had to keep in view as follows :—

Events prior to the battle, August 14 to 16.

“The fruits of the victory (Colombey) can only be gathered by a vigorous offensive on the part of the Second Army in the direction of the roads leading from Metz to Verdun.”

Emperor's orders to Second Army.

The communications received from royal headquarters, as well as the reports sent in by the various corps during the 15th, had convinced the Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army (Prince Frederick Charles) that the French were in retreat towards the Meuse. At 7 p.m. accordingly, Prince Frederick Charles issued the following orders for the 16th :—

“Third and Tenth Corps with Fifth and Sixth Cavalry Divisions to advance in force against the Metz-Verdun road; Ninth Corps to Silligny, and to follow Third Corps to Gorze on the 17th; Twelfth Corps to concentrate at Pont-à-Mousson, Guard Corps to Bernécourt; Ninth Corps to reach Les Saizerais.”

Orders of Prince Frederick Charles for the 16th.

The general idea was the movement of the Second Army to the Meuse, with the hope of encountering the enemy before he should reach that river; and when, at

Arrival of the Emperor's order at Pont-à-Mousson. 10.30 p.m. on the 15th, the order above alluded to arrived at Pont-à-Mousson, it was considered that the requirement to occupy the Metz-Verdun road would be met by the arrangements already made.

Movements of Second Army, morning of the 16th. Accordingly, on the morning of the 16th the Second Army moved off as arranged, and up to midday no report came from the Third Corps to cause any change in these movements.\*

Position of the French army, morning of 16th (see Sketch 1). In the French Army the movement westwards, which had been interrupted by the battle of Colombey,† was continued on the 15th, and on the evening of that day the left wing had reached Gravelotte and Rezonville. Three divisions of the right wing (Third and Fourth Corps), however, were still in the valley of the Moselle, and the retreat, which was to have been continued at 4 a.m. on the 16th, was postponed until noon.

First appearance of Fifth and Sixth Prussian Cavalry Divisions. General von Voigts-Rhetz (Tenth Corps) thought it advisable to combine with his march on St. Hilaire a reconnaissance in force in the direction of the French encampment reported at Rezonville on the evening of the 15th. Accordingly, early in the morning of the 16th, the Fifth Cavalry Division (Rheinbaben) was detached for this duty. Meanwhile the Third Corps, marching by divisions (Fifth Division by Gorze, Sixth Division by Onville), was preceded by the Sixth Cavalry Division. These two cavalry divisions (Fifth and Sixth) joined hands south-east of Tronville about 8.10 a.m.

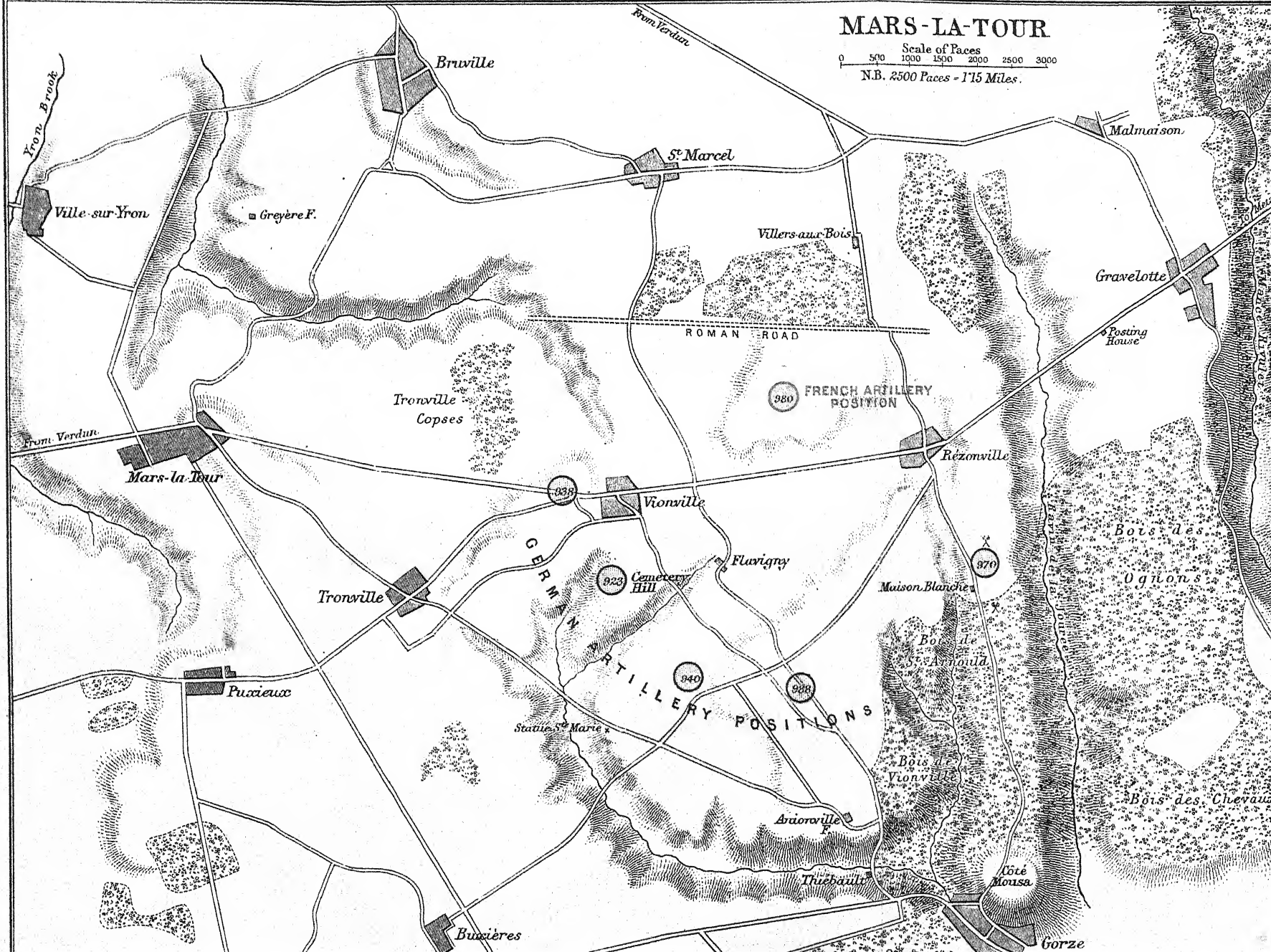
The Fifth Cavalry Division, preceded by four horse artillery batteries, advanced against Vionville in the

\* For position on morning of 16th, and lines of march of Third and Tenth Corps, and Fifth and Sixth Cavalry Divisions, see Sketch 1.

† On the 14th of August the French were in the act of transferring their forces from the right to the left bank of the Moselle, when their rear guard was sharply attacked by the Germans, and, being hard pressed, the movement to the other bank had to be suspended.

# MARS-LA-TOUR

Scale of Paces  
0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000  
N.B. 2500 Paces = 1.75 Miles.





arc of a circle, the artillery taking up a position to the north-east of Tronville. About 9.30 a.m. the guns opened fire on the cavalry camp of Forton and Valabrègue, situated to the west of Vionville. A scene of the wildest confusion ensued, and the French cavalry galloped back pell-mell through the lines of the Second Corps. At the same time the horse artillery battery of the Sixth Cavalry Division opened fire from the south. At the first shot, the infantry of the Second and Sixth French Corps fell in under arms, and the wood of St. Arnould, as well as the *débouchée* of the Gorze ravine near Maison Blanche, were occupied by the brigades of Lepasset and Vergé, Vionville and Flavigny by the division of Bataille. At the same time Canrobert despatched a division to Vionville, leaving the Division Tixier at St. Marcel, and posting the Division Levassor Sorval in reserve east of Rezonville.

Commencement of the action by the German artillery, 9.30 a.m.

Positions taken up by the Second and Sixth French Army Corps.

The Prussian cavalry, which had accompanied the artillery in its advance against Vionville, was thus checked. The Fifth Cavalry Division retired to the southern edge of the Tronville copses. The horse artillery remained for a time in a position north-west of Vionville, to which it had advanced, directing its fire upon the hostile infantry, in spite of the cannonade directed against it from the north-east. The batteries withdrew finally to the east of Tronville; the Sixth Cavalry Division retired to Anconville Farm.

Retreat of the Prussian cavalry and horse artillery.

About 10 a.m. the heads of the columns of the Third Prussian Corps showed themselves: the Fifth Infantry Division coming up the Gorze ravine, the Sixth Infantry Division by Chambley and Buxières, directing its march on Mars-la-Tour.

First appearance of the Third Prussian Army Corps, 10 a.m.

At this period it became evident that what had been originally taken for a strong rearguard, was in reality the main body of the French army; and General von

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Alvensleben (Third Corps) had before him the tremendous task of holding the French Army with his single corps, and later on with the addition of the Tenth Corps, which latter could not, however, be expected to arrive until the afternoon.

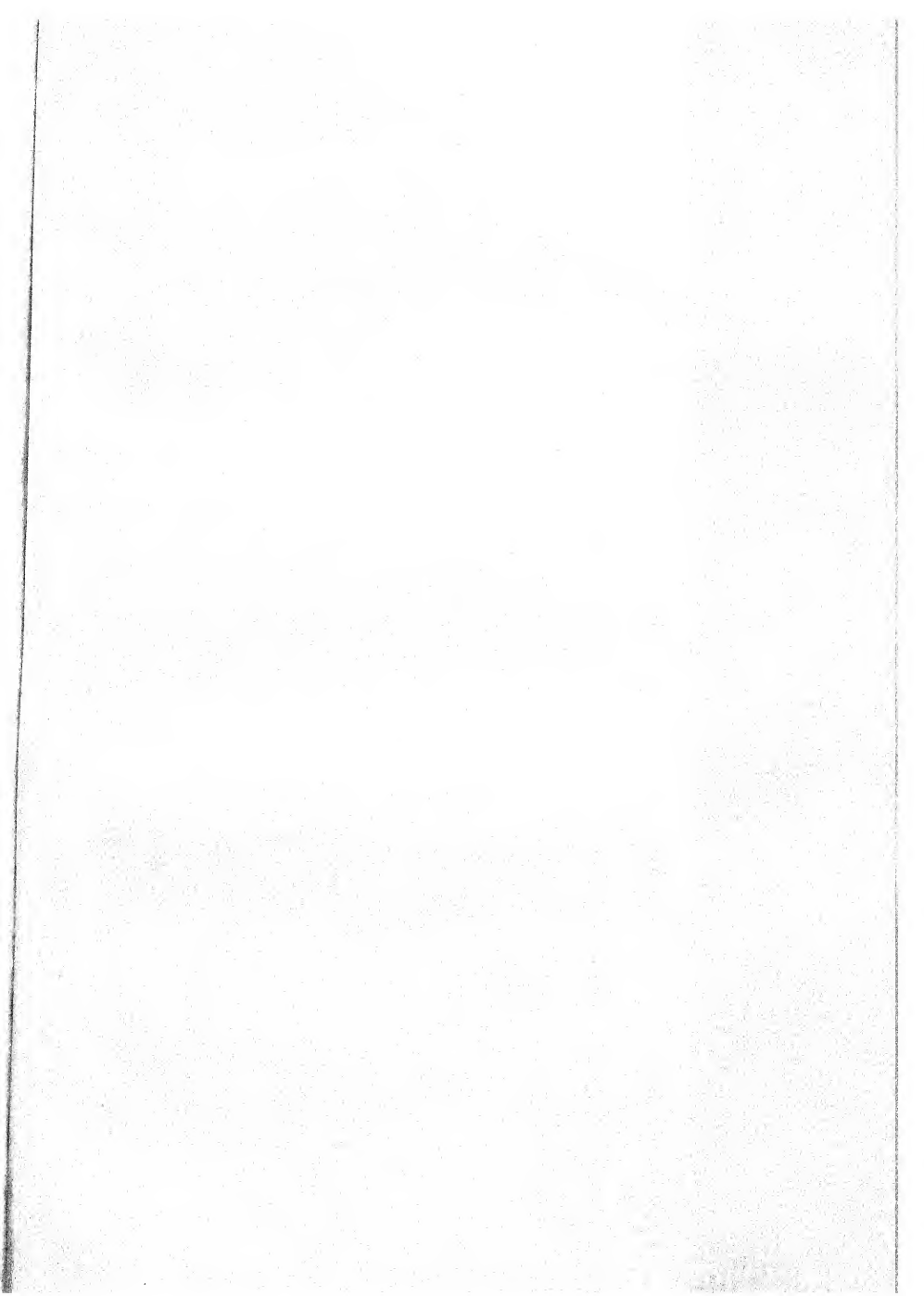
Description of the field of Mars-la-Tour.

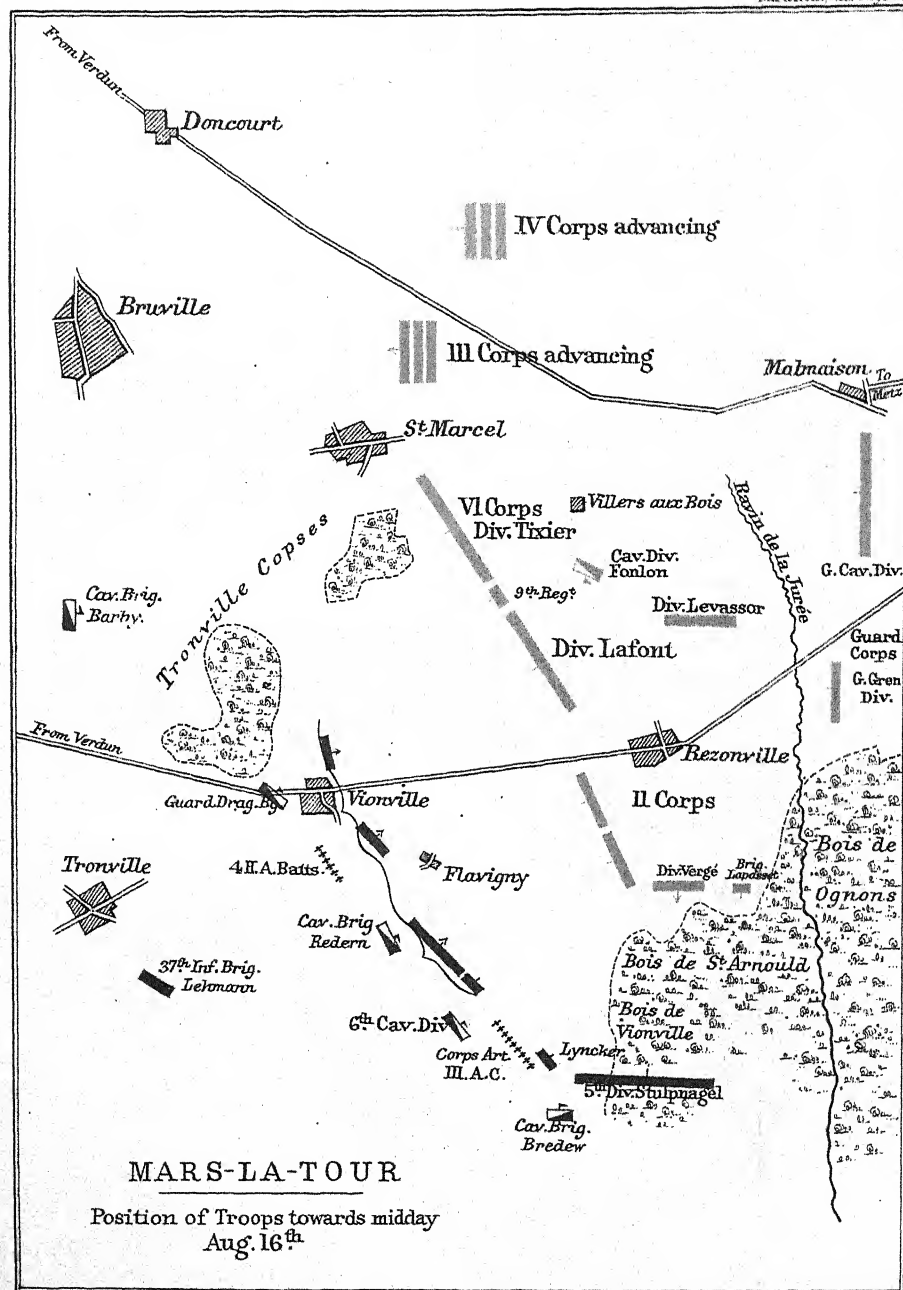
The field which was about to become the scene of one of the most sanguinary conflicts on record, lies to the west of Gravelotte, on both sides of the main road from Metz to Verdun, which leads (between Gravelotte and the Yron) over an open plateau, bounded to the east and south by large dense connected woods.

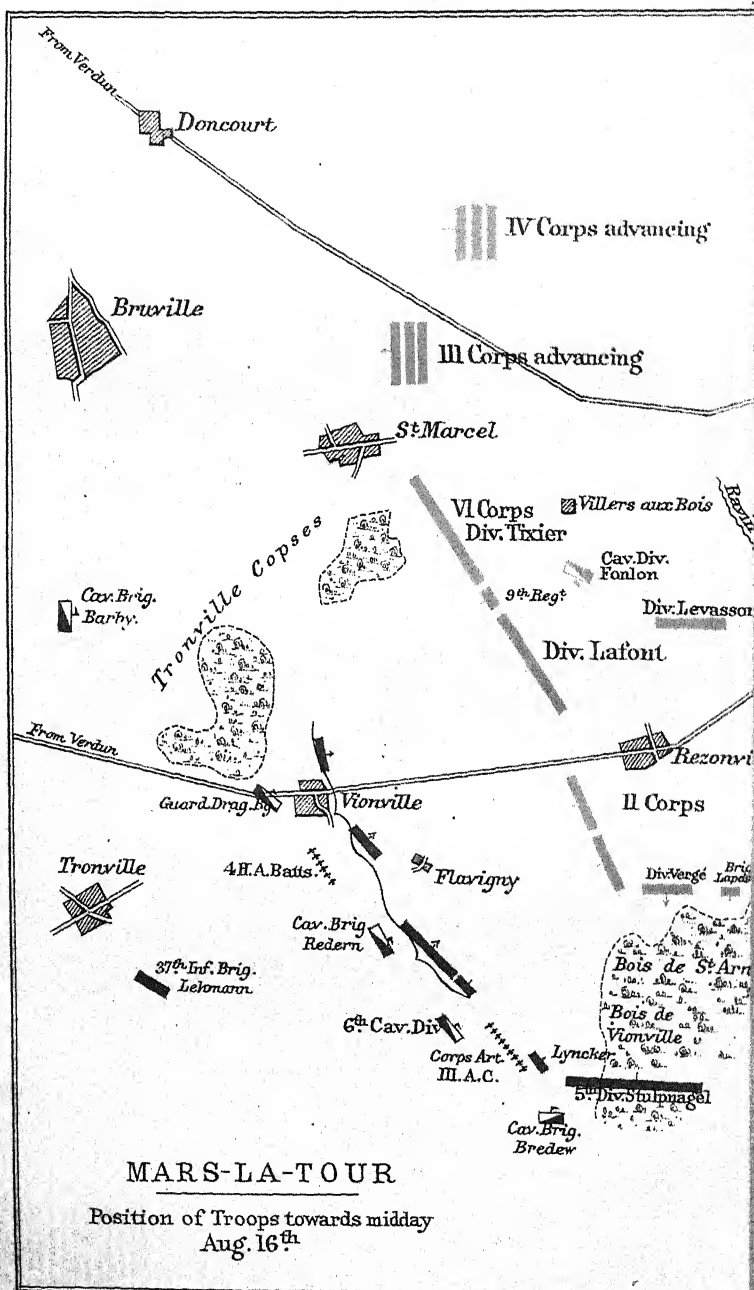
In other respects a good view can generally be obtained all over the field. Cover can only be obtained by taking advantage of the natural undulations of the ground, and of the deep valleys or ravines running from Vionville, Rezonville, and Malmaison, in a southerly direction; from Mars-la-Tour in a northerly direction; and from Vionville northwards to the Roman road, and thence in a westerly direction, until it unites with the last-named valley. The Tronville copses also formed an important feature capable of affording considerable cover. (See Map.)

From 10 a.m. until noon; Fifth German Infantry Division.

On arriving at Gorze, the Fifth Infantry Division learnt from the cavalry that the French occupied the top of the Vionville ravine. The officer commanding the advance guard immediately occupied St. Thiébaut and the Côte Mousa, and continued his march; on arriving at the plateau, a violent struggle ensued for the mouth of the defile, which was finally carried and held with the aid of four batteries and the support of the Tenth Brigade. The fight at this point swayed backwards and forwards for some time, until finally the French were driven back upon Flavigny, and the remaining troops of the Tenth Brigade formed in reserve on the Buxières road.







Meanwhile the Sixth Infantry Division had debouched in the direction of Mars-la-Tour, but upon receipt of more accurate information about the enemy, turned to the right and, preceded by its artillery, directed its march on Vionville. The divisional artillery took up a position to the south-west of Vionville, and was soon joined by the corps artillery and horse artillery batteries. These batteries were only protected by a few squadrons, and drew on themselves a heavy fire, but continued to keep up a lively cannonade against the village, under cover of which the Sixth Infantry Division deployed, the Eleventh Brigade to the right, the Twelfth Brigade to the left; and attacking Vionville on three sides simultaneously, soon made themselves masters of the village.

Arrival of  
the Sixth  
German  
Infantry  
Division.

Capture of  
Vionville  
by the  
Germans.

A storm of shells, however, from the French artillery, posted on height (980), rendered it untenable, and there was nothing for it but a further advance; a rush was accordingly made on Flavigny, and a wild struggle ensued for the possession of the plateau. The French at last gave way, but the Germans were now in the most utter disorder, and it seemed that they might at any moment lose the footing they had gained on the plateau.

At this juncture the chief of the staff of the Third Corps suggested that the two squadrons present should charge the retreating brigades of Pouget and Colin. The charge was delivered gallantly, and the position saved, but at a great sacrifice, and without disturbing the order of the French retreat. Sufficient time had thus been gained to re-form the Prussian line, and thus avert any chance of a catastrophe in the event of the French attempting a counter-attack; the gap which had previously existed between the Fifth and Sixth Infantry Divisions was moreover filled up and the Third Corps reunited.

Capture of  
Flavigny  
and the  
plateau  
by the  
Germans.

Charge of  
German  
cavalry.

The occupation of Flavigny gave the first real point of support to the front of the attack facing east, and henceforth formed the centre of the line of battle of the Third Corps, being specially valuable as an *appui* for the right wing of the Sixth Infantry Division.

Formation of a second line (German).

German cavalry in reserve, in rear of the flanks.

This thin line, without reserves of any sort, was however, vulnerable at all points, and General von Alvensleben (Third Corps), in order to form a second line, placed the Fifth Cavalry Division in reserve behind the Tronville copses, and the Sixth Cavalry Division near Anconville Farm, both being held in readiness to charge.

Arrival of the Thirty-seventh Brigade (Tenth Corps) (see Sketch 2).

Of the Tenth Corps, only the Thirty-seventh Brigade had as yet appeared on the field; the smaller half (Lyncker, see Sketch 1) had already been engaged north of Anconville; the remainder (Lehmann) arrived on the field about 11.45 a.m., and was posted at Tronville.

French dispositions from the commencement of the battle until noon.

It will now be necessary to turn our attention to the movements of the French during the forenoon, in so far as they have not already been noticed. We have seen that Bazaine had made the following dispositions before the capture of Vionville and Flavigny, viz.: Levassor Sorval's Division north-east and east of Rezonville, facing south; Zouaves of the Guard and a cavalry brigade about the same point; Grenadiers of the Guard further retired towards Gravelotte, under Picard; Voltigeurs of the Guard (Deligny), as a last reserve, at Malmaison. Thus three divisions of infantry and one of cavalry were held in reserve at a point which was never seriously threatened. The reserve artillery at Rezonville, behind the Sixth Corps, its right flank guarded by Forton's Cavalry Division, and its left flank by Valabrègue's Cavalry Division.

The capture of Vionville and Flavigny had entailed



the retreat of the *entire right wing* of the French Army upon Rezonville, as we have just seen.

It was at this juncture that the retreating columns of the French were charged by two German squadrons (p. 61); and Bazaine, seeing how matters stood, ordered the 3rd Lancers, followed in echelon by the Cuirassiers of the Guard, to charge the pursuing German cavalry. The object of the attack does not appear to have been clearly indicated to the lancers, and their attack was abortive. The cuirassiers, however, delivered their charge home, and at a fearful cost; horse and rider fell before the murderous file fire of the Tenth Brigade, and the remnant of this gallant regiment returned, leaving 22 officers, 208 men, and 243 horses dead or dying on the field.

Continuation of the battle from noon until 3 p.m.

Charge of French cuirassiers.

The Germans now reaped the benefit of General Von Alvensleben's judicious disposition of the cavalry; Redern's Brigade (Fifth Cavalry Division) was launched in pursuit of the French cuirassiers, from its position near the Tronville copses; the hussars charged across the plain, but suddenly a battery being brought into action on their right flank, diverts the direction of their charge. A combined front and flank attack is made upon this battery, which is captured. Bazaine himself is engaged in the *mêlée*, and with difficulty avoids being made a prisoner. The charge only stops at the high-road near Rezonville, where the presence of a battalion of chasseurs and two squadrons of Bazaine's escort, as well as the gradual collection of French cavalry from different quarters, causes the hussars to retire to Flavigny and the Cemetery Hill. Meanwhile the reserve artillery of the French had deployed north of Rezonville (height, 980; see Map), and Canrobert (Sixth Corps) had called up the Division Tixier from St. Marcel to outflank the German left. (Sketch 2.)

Prepara-  
tions for  
charge of  
Sixth  
Prussian  
Cavalry  
Division.

In the meantime General von Alvensleben, wishing to turn to account the retreat of the Second French Corps, ordered the Sixth Cavalry Division to prepare to charge. Some time elapsed before this order could be delivered, and in the meantime Bazaine had not been idle.

Move-  
ments  
of the  
French.

The Voltigeur Division of the Guard had been ordered from Malmaison to the posting-house at Gravelotte, to replace Picard's Division, which had been sent forward into the line of battle south of Rezonville, to re-occupy the positions vacated by the Second Corps. (Sketch 3.)

1 p.m.

Thus, when the Sixth Division of German cavalry moved forward along the confined space between Flavigny and the Buxières road, the fresh troops of the French were already in position and received them with a hot fire, while the artillery north of Rezonville overwhelmed them with projectiles. Retreat was ordered to Flavigny. The Prussian artillery had, however, profited by this apparently abortive cavalry advance, and taken up a more forward position opposite Rezonville from which they could prevent the enemy from advancing over the height in front (989). The infantry, too, endeavoured to push forward beyond Vionville, but was received in front by a storm of shells from the batteries north of Rezonville, and on its left flank by a withering fire from the troops of the Sixth Corps, which had executed the changes enjoined by Canrobert. Tixier's Division soon reached the Roman road, and the Prussian infantry changed front to the north to encounter the new enemy; but it was impossible to cross in the open under the storm of shells which was being poured in from the batteries north of Rezonville.

Advance  
of the  
Prussian  
artillery  
of the  
Fifth  
Infantry  
Division.

Critical  
position of  
Prussian

The position was now becoming critical for the Germans, but the road by which the Tenth Corps was

expected to arrive must be held at any cost. There was no reserve available except Lehmann's demi-brigade, which had reached Tronville about 11.45 a.m. ; the head of this brigade had continued its advance northward into the Tronville copses, and after struggling through the thick underwood exposed to shell fire from St. Marcel, succeeded with difficulty in reaching the north-east corner of the wood. After a gallant attempt to issue from the copses in this direction, and thus get within effective range of the French, the demi-brigade was compelled to retire again under cover of the wood, having suffered considerable losses from the long-ranging chassepot.

Third Corps.

Advance of Lehmann's demi-brigade through the Tronville copses.

Effects of French long-range fire.

It was clear that something must be done, and that quickly, to save the German left. The fire of the French batteries on the Roman road must be silenced at any cost ; and, as a last resource, the six squadrons which still remained to General Von Bredow (Fifth Cavalry Division) were hurled at the enemy, while the rest of the division guarded the left flank of the Third Corps. The charge was delivered home, under an overwhelming artillery and infantry fire, through the first line, through the second line, until at length, after a career of over three thousand paces, the gallant little band was met on all sides by French cavalry. The recall is sounded ; breathless and exhausted, they fight their way back through the previously ridden over lines of hostile infantry and artillery, under a hail of bullets. Forton's Brigade of cavalry did not attempt any serious pursuit, and the remnant of six squadrons rallied in rear of Flavigny, scarcely able to muster two squadrons. 379 men and 409 horses were left upon the field.

Von Bredow's cavalry charge against the position on plateau (980).

Now was the time for Bazaine to clear the Metz-Verdun road of the opposing Prussian forces. The French Third Corps was in sight, and the Fourth Corps

Bazaine loses his opportunity of

assuming the offensive. was already on the march from Doncourt. But he was still anxious about his left, and the opportunity was lost.

Formation of Prussian reserve at Vionville. The Prussians, on the other hand, made the most of the temporary suspension of pressure on their left, and occupied the long-contested edge of the heights opposite the Roman road; a reserve was, moreover, formed at Vionville.

Continuation of the battle after 3 p.m. It was now 3 p.m., and a lull took place in the fight, which was continued only by the artillery in a more or less desultory fashion.

Second period of the battle. Reinforcements were, however, coming up on the west of the present field of battle, both from north and south, and the struggle was shortly renewed with unabated vigour on both sides.

Fight for the Tronville copses. The French at Bruville and St Marcel had hitherto contented themselves with fighting a delaying action against the Tronville copses, waiting for reinforcements from Doncourt; but shortly after 3 p.m. the arrival of the greater part of the Third and Fourth Corps enabled them to push on to the attack. The Divisions Aymard and Grenier were in first line, the Division Nayral in reserve between them (Sketch 3), and Villers aux Bois with Juniac's Cavalry Brigade. Cissey's Division was on the march to form the extreme right.

The combat was renewed and maintained with the greatest obstinacy, until, after an hour's hard fighting, the Prussians were driven back to the southern edge of the copse. The guns west of Vionville (938) formed a rallying point for the Prussian left wing thus driven back.

Concentration of French artillery fire upon Prussian artillery position. The French artillery to the south of St. Marcel and on the Roman road north-east of Vionville kept up a heavy fire in the meanwhile upon the four batteries to the north of the road west of Vionville (838). The ammunition of these batteries being nearly spent, they

were ordered to withdraw to the south-west of Vionville. (height 838). The Prussian batteries on the south of the road (838) had now to bear the brunt of the enemy's fire. Three batteries of Grenier's Division had by this time come into action on the heights west of the Tronville copses, thus taking the Prussian batteries in reverse; the two batteries on the left had, therefore, to show front to their left rear, forming a right angle with the other two batteries still firing to the north and north-east.

The Prussian infantry had meanwhile evacuated the copses, under the protection of the determined fire of their artillery. The losses they had sustained had been very heavy, and the remnant of Lehmann's gallant demi-brigade (Thirty-seventh Brigade) occupied Tronville and prepared it for defence; a few detachments still continuing to maintain themselves in the western part of the copses.

An advance of the French across the high-road might now be expected to take place at any moment. But at this most critical juncture, after a march of twenty-seven miles, the Twentieth Prussian Infantry Division (Tenth Corps) arrived on the field near Tronville. (Sketch 3.)

A portion of this division was immediately directed to the right, to assist the Fifth Infantry Division; the Corps Artillery was directed to Vionville to reinforce the five batteries\* which had with difficulty maintained themselves up till now against the heavy concentrated fire of the enemy. The remainder of the division was ordered to reinforce the left wing.

At the first attempt, the Prussians succeeded in crossing the high-road; the French, though in far superior

Prussian  
infantry  
evacuate  
Tronville  
copses.

Arrival  
of the  
Twentieth  
Prussian  
Infantry  
Division,  
4 p.m.  
(Sketch  
3.)

The  
Prussian  
advance

\* Two Batteries Corps Artillery } of Third Corps.  
One Battery Horse Artillery }  
Fourth Heavy Battery } of Tenth Corps.  
Fourth Light Battery }

across the high-road. numbers, seemed to hesitate. An attack on the French right seemed now to promise good results; and the Thirty-eighth Brigade, which had reached the field *via* Thiaucourt, B noit, and St. Hilaire, was formed in a quarter circle north-east of Mars-la-Tour for this purpose.

Arrival of Prince Frederick Charles, 4 p.m. At 4 p.m. Prince Frederick Charles arrived on the field from Pont- -Mousson. After briefly surveying the state of affairs, he ordered the right to remain fast, while the left was to make a concerted attack on the right flank of the enemy.

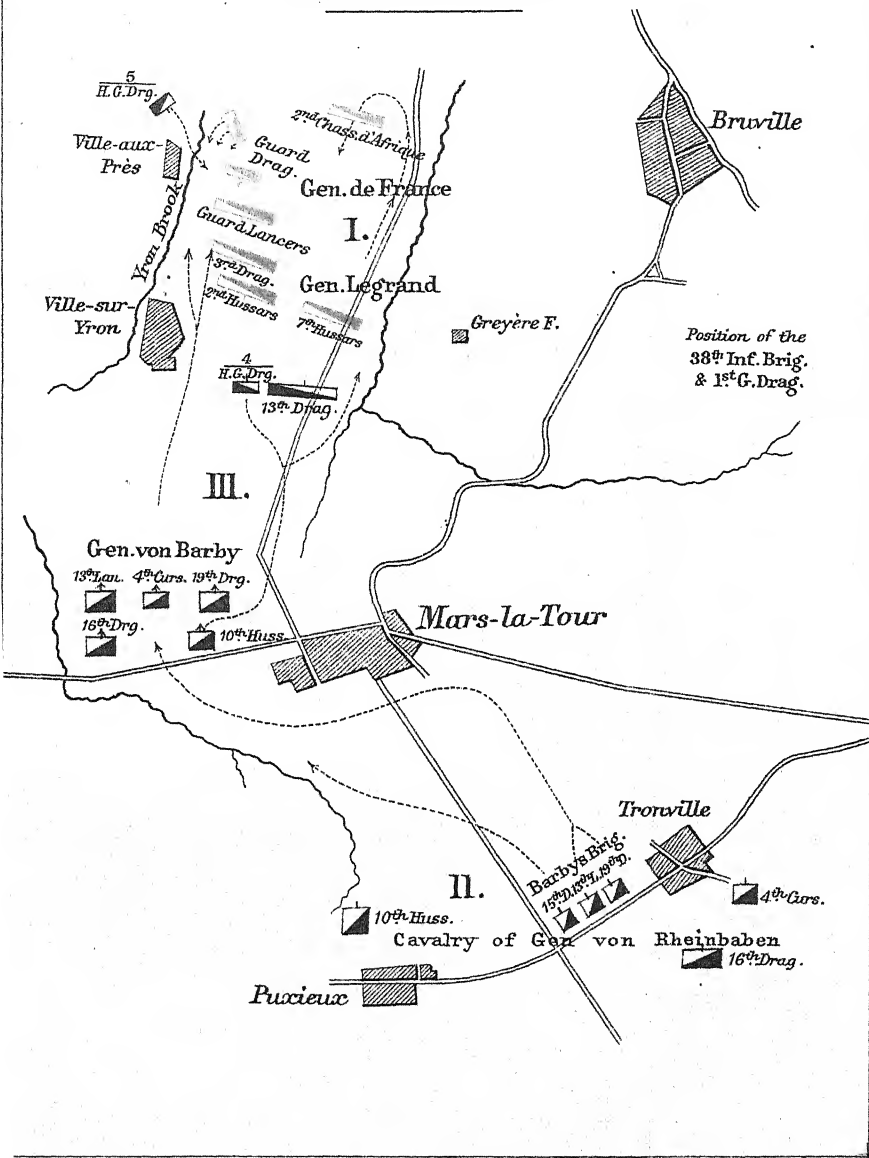
Dispositions for attack of French right flank. In consequence of these orders the 60 guns between Vionville and Flavigny were augmented to 102, by the batteries of the Tenth Corps, those of the Cavalry Divisions, and those of the Eighth Corps now debouching from Gorze. The Thirty-eighth Brigade continued its preparations for attack.

Bazaine's dispositions, 4 p.m. Meanwhile Bazaine, still fearing for his left, had ordered all offensive action to cease,\* and reinforced his left by the Division Montaudon; at the same time Marshal Le B uf was ordered to hold his ground and rally the Sixth Corps. Bazaine thus let slip the favourable opportunity for assuming the offensive, created by the state of affairs on the Prussian left, which has been alluded to.

Advance of the Thirty-eighth Brigade. The Thirty-eighth Brigade (German Tenth Corps) now advances to the attack in the stated formation (see ante), supported on the left by the 2nd Heavy Battery, under an overwhelming artillery fire, which, however, does but little execution. The brigade ascends the nearest ridges, but in descending the bare hillside, which falls at first gently towards a deep ravine running east and west across the front of the French position, the attackers are received with a murderous musketry and

\* This order accounted for the hesitation displayed by the French, which has just been referred to.

# MARS-LA-TOUR



mitrailleuse fire ; the second line moves up rapidly into the line of skirmishers, which now advances by rushes of one hundred to one hundred and fifty paces down the slope. The skirmishers now come suddenly upon the ravine, in places near fifty feet deep ; but even this does not stop them, and all five battalions rise quickly into view on the opposite side within a hundred yards of the French line. A furious interchange of musketry fire at close quarters ensues, but at this moment Cissey's Division, which had come up at the double to the support of Grenier's hard-pressed troops, hurls itself upon the scattered battalions of the Prussian brigade. The superiority of the French is too overwhelming, and the retreat has to be sounded ; the Prussians fall back into the valley, but many are no longer capable of ascending the rear slopes of the steep ravine, and more than 300 men fall into the enemy's hands. The two pioneer companies which had established themselves in the north-west corner of the Tronville copses endeavour by their flanking fire to arrest the further advance of the French ; but the enemy has already crossed the ravine, and at any moment the masses of cavalry collecting in rear of the French right may sweep down on the Prussian left and drive it back.

Thirty-eight  
Brigade is  
forced to  
retire.

For the second time, the Prussian cavalry save the day. General von Voigts Rhetz (Tenth Corps) orders the retreat of the remainder of the Thirty-eighth Brigade upon Tronville. General von Rheinbaben and Count Brandenburg, on the other hand, receive orders to advance with the cavalry at all hazards.

Charge  
of the  
Prussian  
Dragoons  
of the  
Guard.

In accordance with these instructions, the 1st Dragoons of the Guard trot forward at once from the south-eastern angle of the village of Mars-la-Tour, across the high-road, in order to gain the right flank of the French infantry. The desired point being reached, the



pace is increased and the charge delivered successfully, driving the French completely back into the ravine. Upon the rally being sounded, it is found that 11 officers, 125 men, and 250 horses, have been left upon the field.\*

Encounter  
between  
the French  
and  
German  
cavalry,  
6.45 p.m.

Behind the dragoons and to their left, five regiments of cavalry charge in two lines, in the direction of Ville-sur-Yron, upon which point General L'Admirault (Fourth French Corps) had concentrated Le Grand's Cavalry Division, De France's Brigade, and the 2nd Chasseurs d'Afrique. The two opposing masses of cavalry now rush impetuously upon each other, and for a brief space nothing but a cloud of dust can be seen where the furious encounter takes place. Soon, however, the dust clears partially away, and the French line is seen to be receding. The retreat is sounded, and the French retire upon Bruville; while the Prussians, prevented from pursuing by the musketry fire from the Ville-sur-Yron copse and La Greyère Farm, as well as that of a 12-pounder battery, retire upon Mars-la-Tour. Five thousand horse had been engaged in this charge.

Conclu-  
sion of the  
battle on  
the Prus-  
sian left.

Darkness was coming on, and General von Voigts Rhetz commenced withdrawing his batteries from the north to the south side of the high-road, at the same time establishing his divisions to the north of Tronville and Mars-la-Tour.

Continua-  
tion of the  
battle  
on the  
Prussian  
right.

Arrival of  
Sixteenth  
Prussian

The struggle in the eastern portion of the field was, however, more protracted. About 3.30 p.m. the advance guard of the Sixteenth Infantry Division (German) reached Gorze; the artillery of this division had already been sent on to the front. About 5 p.m. the most advanced battalion reached the northern edge of the

\* For the positions during the charge and the subsequent movements leading up to the grand cavalry charge on both sides, see Sketch 4.

Bois de St. Arnould, and found there the two body-guard battalions, which after six hours fighting were now maintaining their position with difficulty, and running short of ammunition. The whole regiment (72nd) now advanced, under a perfect hail of bullets, to the assault of the ridge on which Maison Blanche is situated (see Map); but, owing to the exposed nature of the position, it was found impossible to hold it. Backwards and forwards surged the fight for this important ridge, both sides bringing up reinforcements to the attack, but neither side being able to hold its ground.

Infantry  
Division  
at Gorze.

Fight for  
height  
(970).

About 6.30 p.m. the French, by a most determined assault, drove back the Prussians for the fourth time to the edge of the wood, but found themselves quite as unable to maintain their exposed situation as on previous occasions. The French finally withdrew, and the ridge remained unoccupied for the rest of the day, both sides perceiving that it was futile to attempt to occupy the ridge themselves, and that it was only possible to deny the possession of the coveted position to their enemy.

For this point the Twenty-fifth Prussian Division was now making, advancing from Gorze through the Bois des Chevaux and the Bois des Ognons; it gained the north-west edge of the wood and forced the French reserves back to Rezonville. No further success, however, could be gained at this point, and at 10 p.m. the contest was discontinued.

Arrival  
of the  
Twenty-  
fifth  
Prussian  
Division.  
Conclu-  
sion of the  
battle on  
the  
extreme  
Prussian  
right.

Prince Frederick Charles, from his position at Flavigny, had closely watched the progress of the battle, and as the firing in the eastern portion of the field became more vigorous towards 7 p.m., and the reports received led him to expect the arrival of the Ninth Corps on that wing, he judged it a favourable

Final  
attack  
upon  
Rezon-  
ville.

moment for an attack in force upon Rezonville, thinking that the unexpected nature of such an attack in the fast falling twilight would produce a great moral effect, even if unattended by more substantial results.

Accordingly, about 7 p.m., orders were given for a general advance of the artillery\* to crown the long-contested height (989).

The artillery advance was followed on the north of the high-road by the infantry,† and supported by the Sixth Cavalry Division.

8 p.m.

At 8 p.m. the batteries crowned the heights (with the exception of 4th Light and 4th Heavy, Third Corps) to the south of Rezonville (989), but at the same moment a murderous fire was opened on them from the massed batteries (54 guns) of the French Guard Corps (Bourbaki) collected on the further side of the Rezonville valley. After sustaining heavy losses, the Prussian artillery retired to its former position.

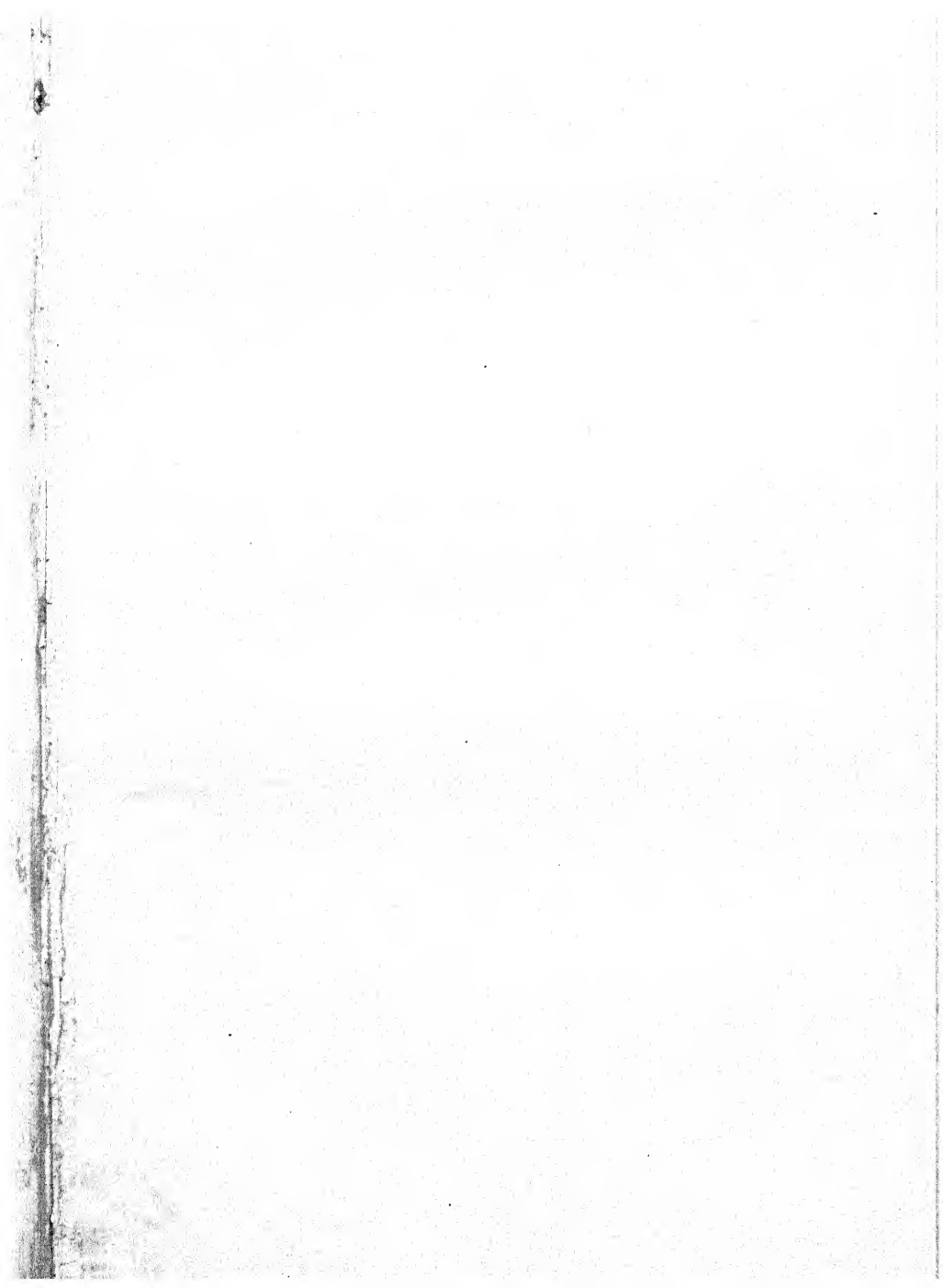
*\* Artillery engaged in the Attack on Rezonville.*

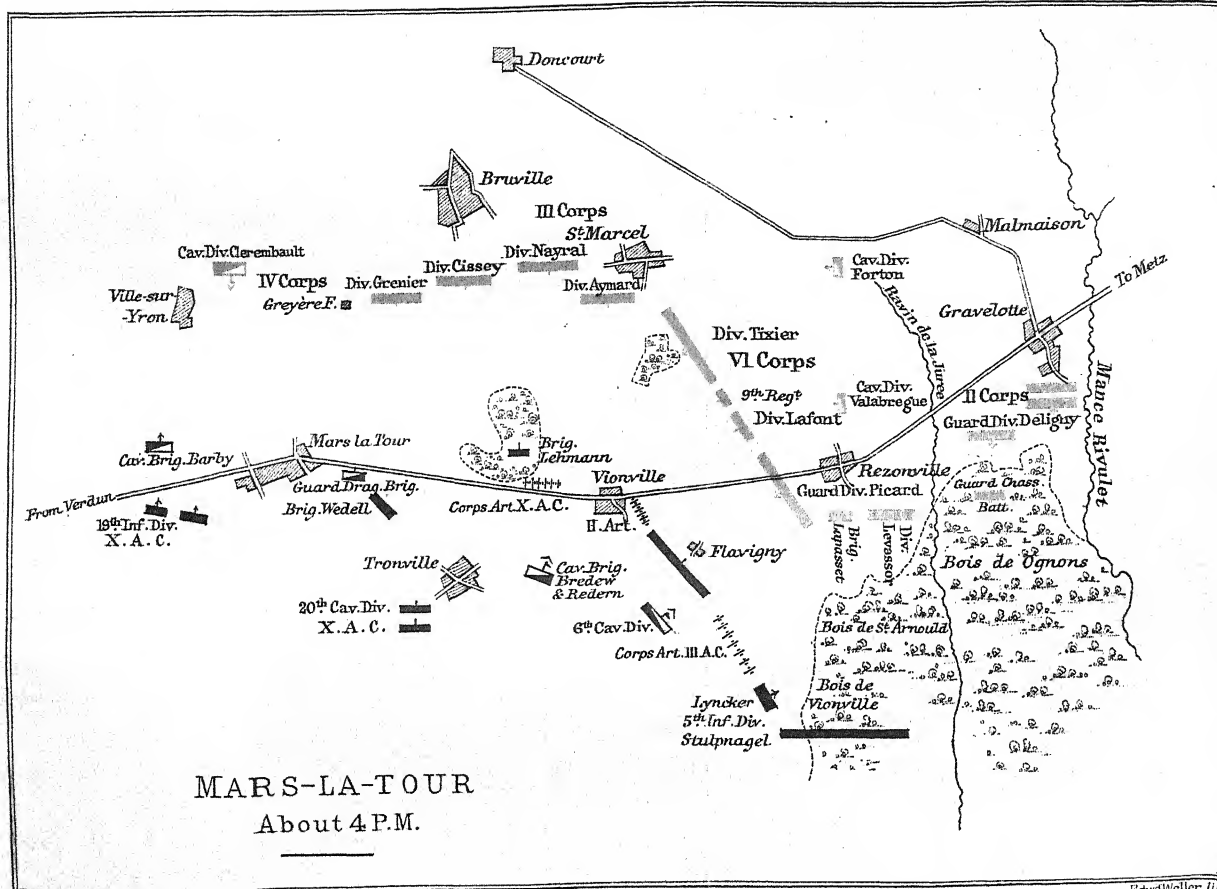
Right { 1st Light } Batteries of the Twenty-fifth Division,  
           { 2nd Heavy } from Gorze.  
           { 1st Light Battery attached to Fifth Division.  
                                 Total, 18 guns.

Centre { Three Horse Artillery Batteries } Third Corps.  
           { 6th Light Battery }  
                                 from the centre of the Artillery line.  
           { Three Batteries, Twentieth Division.  
           { 5th Heavy Battery, Tenth Corps.  
                                 Total, 42 guns.

Left { 3rd Horse Artillery Battery, Tenth Corps.  
           { 4th Light } Batteries, Third Corps.  
           { 4th Heavy }  
                                 Total, 18 guns.  
                                 Grand Total, 78 guns.

† { Detachments 25th Regiment (Alten).  
       { 1st Battalion 20th Regiment (Stocken).  
       { Fusilier Battalion 20th Regiment (Pirch).





Edw. Weller, lith.

8 p.m.

Meanwhile Colonel von Schmidt, with the Hussar Brigade, advanced across the high-road upon Rezonville, and charged the scarcely distinguishable mass of skirmishers ; but men and horses were exhausted, and the brigade was compelled to retire with heavy losses. Both cavalry commanders were wounded in this advance.

The evident superiority of the French did not admit of the attack in force contemplated by the Commander-in-Chief. General von Voigts Rhetz had promised to maintain his position between Mars-la-Tour and Tronville, and the fighting all along the line appeared to have ceased,\* when about 8.30 p.m. the firing in the direction of Rezonville increased in intensity, and General von Kraatz advanced with two battalions upon Vionville ; but no advance could be made upon Rezonville.

Conclusion of the battle.

At 9 p.m. the contest had practically ceased, and 9 p.m. the exhausted troops sought rest, after perhaps the hardest day's fighting ever recorded. The line of Prussian outposts extended in a broad bow from the Bois des Ognons on the right, by the Tronville copses, to the Yron brook on the left.

Prussian outposts.

### *Summary.*

The losses sustained on each side in the Battle of Mars-la-Tour amounted to about 16,000 men, and up till nightfall victory had not declared for either side. There was no immediate reaping of the advantages gained on either hand, for as night fell neither army was able to advance one step beyond the battle-field.

General deductions.

No tactical advantage could therefore be claimed by either of the contending forces. The Germans, however, had obtained a most important strategical advantage, in occupying the high-road to Verdun and cutting

\* See conclusion of the battle on extreme Prussian right.

off the enemy's retreat. They had also established an immense moral superiority in obtaining these results, opposed to a force more than double their number ; the French, moreover, had the advantage of coming fresh into action, while the German troops had in almost every case made long and even forced marches before coming into action.

The battle of Mars-la-Tour resembles that of Woerth, in that it was commenced without preconcerted plan on the part of the Germans ; the action being entered upon by the advance guard on its own responsibility, and troops hurried up from the rear, and their lines of march diverted, to bring them as quickly as possible into the line of battle at any point where it seemed likely that they would be most required. At Woerth, however, the French were found in a position prepared for fighting, while at Mars-la-Tour they had no such advantage. In the latter case, however, they had the superiority in numerical strength, which at Woerth lay with their adversaries.

Importance of subordinate commanders knowing when to take the initiative.

We have seen how, after the battle of Colombey, the general idea of the Emperor of Germany was to move the Second Army with all possible speed to the Meuse, and, if possible intercept Bazaine's retreating force before it could take up a position on that river. The Third Army Corps forming the right flank advance guard of the Second Army was preceded by the Sixth Cavalry Division ; and the commander of the Tenth Army Corps had detached the Fifth Cavalry Division to the right to feel for the enemy—supposed to be retreating towards the Meuse. It has been recounted how the action was commenced and a junction formed by these two cavalry divisions, and how, upon the arrival of the Third Corps upon the field, General von Alvensleben determined to continue the action. The importance of this decision



can scarcely be over-rated. The responsibility of engaging the whole of Bazaine's army with a single army corps, and risking annihilation, or of allowing the French to organize their retreat unopposed, at all events, for that day, rested with the commander of the Third Corps. Once committed to the action, he knew that every available battalion must be hurried up from the rear to his assistance ; that without the support of a considerable number of guns he could not hope to hold his own for long against the immense superiority of the French ; that with the exception of the Tenth Corps he could not expect any reinforcements until late in the afternoon ; and that those reinforcements would be tired out with long marches. On the other hand, he knew that if he could succeed in obtaining possession of and holding the Metz-Verdun road, no matter at how great a cost, he would have obtained a strategical success of the very first importance, and one which could not fail to affect the whole course of the campaign. The little force at the general's command responded nobly to his call, and proved worthy of the confidence placed in it. With such materials and in such circumstances he was justified in assuming the responsibility of bringing on a general engagement, in a case which demanded resolute and speedy action.

Referring again to the battle of Woerth, we observe that in this case, too, a general engagement was brought on by the independent action of the commanders of advanced guards. This was, however, a very different case, and, in fact, the hasty rushing into action of the German troops at Woerth was wholly opposed to the preconcerted plans of the Crown Prince, who was perfectly well aware of the general state of affairs, and had intended to give battle the following day. The result was that the German losses on that day were unneces-

Comparison with the battle of Woerth.

sarily heavy, and great fatigue and hardship were sustained by the troops. Finally, the fruits of a really brilliant victory could not be reaped, and for some days the touch of the enemy was completely lost. The battle of Woerth could have been fought with equal success and far more brilliant results on the day following that on which it actually was fought; the battle of Mars-la-Tour would never have been fought at all, if it had not been fought on the 16th of August, and Bazaine's army would never have been shut up in Metz.

Dispersion  
of German  
corps  
during a  
flank  
march.

The battle of Mars-la-Tour brings prominently before us the grave disasters to which an army exposes itself, when executing a flank march in dispersed columns in the presence of the enemy. Without entering too much into strategical detail, it is evident from the brief summary of the orders for the march of the Second Army, given at page 57, that the situation of the Germans during the movements immediately succeeding the battle of Colombey, the crossing of the Moselle in dispersed columns and the subsequent march of these columns on the 16th of August, was critical in the extreme. It was believed at German head-quarters that the French army was in full retreat to the Meuse, and such was actually the case on the 15th; but, as we have seen, the main body of the French was concentrated and halted on the left bank of the river during the morning of the 16th to enable the columns in rear to move up out of the valley. In fact, the actual state of affairs was, that a powerful enemy which had merely been checked and not defeated in the battle of the 14th, was posted in a strong position on the flank of the German line of march. This enemy had every opportunity of strengthening its position south of Metz, and of assuming a vigorous offensive against the detached corps of the Germans as they effected the crossing of the Moselle.

It was only owing to the utter lack of any attempt to gain intelligence on the part of the French cavalry, and the apathy of Bazaine, that the Germans were saved from encountering serious opposition to their advance on the 16th, and enabled on the other hand by a bold dash to place themselves across their enemy's line of retreat. It was not, however, without the most extravagant sacrifices that the Germans achieved their hardly earned laurels on this day. From the beginning to the end of the battle the fate of the German Third and Tenth Corps hung in the balance. The isolated position of the Third Corps during the whole of the forenoon, and the consequent obligation to push up reinforcements as fast as they arrived, into the fighting line; the total absence of any available reserves during a considerable portion of the day, and the heavy sacrifices entailed thereby upon the cavalry; all bear evidence to the extremely critical nature of an engagement which is entered upon without adequate reserves, and without any preconcerted plan on the part of the Commander-in-Chief.

The dispersion of the German corps was, however, rendered necessary by the obligation to cross the Moselle by the bridges of Novéant and Pont-à-Mousson; and considering the extreme difficulty of carrying out such a movement, it appears that it was planned and executed as well as could possibly be expected under the circumstances, though it will still be asserted by many critics that the actual attack on the French position, before the scattered German corps could be in any way concentrated on the left bank of the river, was a rash and precipitate measure, in spite of the great stake which was at issue, viz. the occupation of the Metz-Verdun road, and the cutting off of the French line of retreat.

On the side of the French we see, throughout the

day, the fatal results of bad intelligence. Owing to the utter indifference of Forton's Cavalry in the matter of reconnaissance, they were themselves sent flying back pell-mell in the first instance by the unexpected fire of the Prussian guns ; and later on, Bazaine, always fearing for his left flank, which was in reality perfectly safe, omitted to take advantage of two distinct opportunities of crushing his adversary by a vigorous and well-directed offensive.

Use of  
reserves.

The employment of reserves is a noticeable feature on both sides in this battle. The French, with their comparatively numerous forces, were able to keep up a constant supply of fresh troops in the fighting line, thus again and again opposing the wearied Germans with new forces.

The Germans, at first without any reserves at all, and in imminent danger of their weak line being forced at any point, were compelled to form a reserve of cavalry on each wing ; this being the only second line that they had to trust to until nearly 3 p.m. Both in the early part of the day, and later on in the afternoon, the Germans used their reserves conspicuously in *offensive* movements ; holding them always in readiness, either to take immediate advantage of any temporary success gained in the fighting line, or, if need be, to sacrifice themselves in order to save the front line from being driven in at any point where it might be hard pressed. Thus, at the close of the battle, every man and horse had been utilized to the utmost.

The use of their reserves by the Germans on this day compares most favourably with the action of the French, who, though displaying considerable promptitude in bringing up their divisional and corps reserves, were considerably and unnecessarily handicapped by Bazaine's disposition of the grand reserve on the extreme left

flank, where it was scarcely utilized to any appreciable extent throughout the day. It will be observed in studying the battle of Gravelotte, that Bazaine committed the same mistake again, and in this latter case with the most deplorable results.

Side by side with the question of reserves, we may fitly consider that of withdrawing troops in action. This operation, always difficult and hazardous in the extreme, was carried out with remarkable skill on several occasions; most notably on the French side, when the Second Corps abandoned Vionville and Flavigny and retired toward Gravelotte in good order, in spite of a charge of German cavalry; the movement was assisted by a charge of French cuirassiers.

The German cavalry was employed unsparingly on this eventful field, and it is noticeable that though on two occasions they saved the day for the Germans, yet it was not by any strictly tactical success that they achieved this result, but rather by recklessly and gallantly sacrificing themselves, in order to gain time for the infantry to collect and reform.

Similarly, we see the French cuirassiers employed to protect the retreat of the troops of the Second Corps from Vionville; but here, again, the result was achieved rather by the reckless sacrifice of human life than by actual force of arms; in fact, by substituting one target for another.

In the cavalry engagement north of Mars-la-Tour, neither side was able to claim any distinct *tactical* advantage. It is true that the French were forced to retire; but the Germans were too broken to follow up their success in the face of the infantry fire, and their advantage can scarcely be called anything more than an addition to their *prestige*.

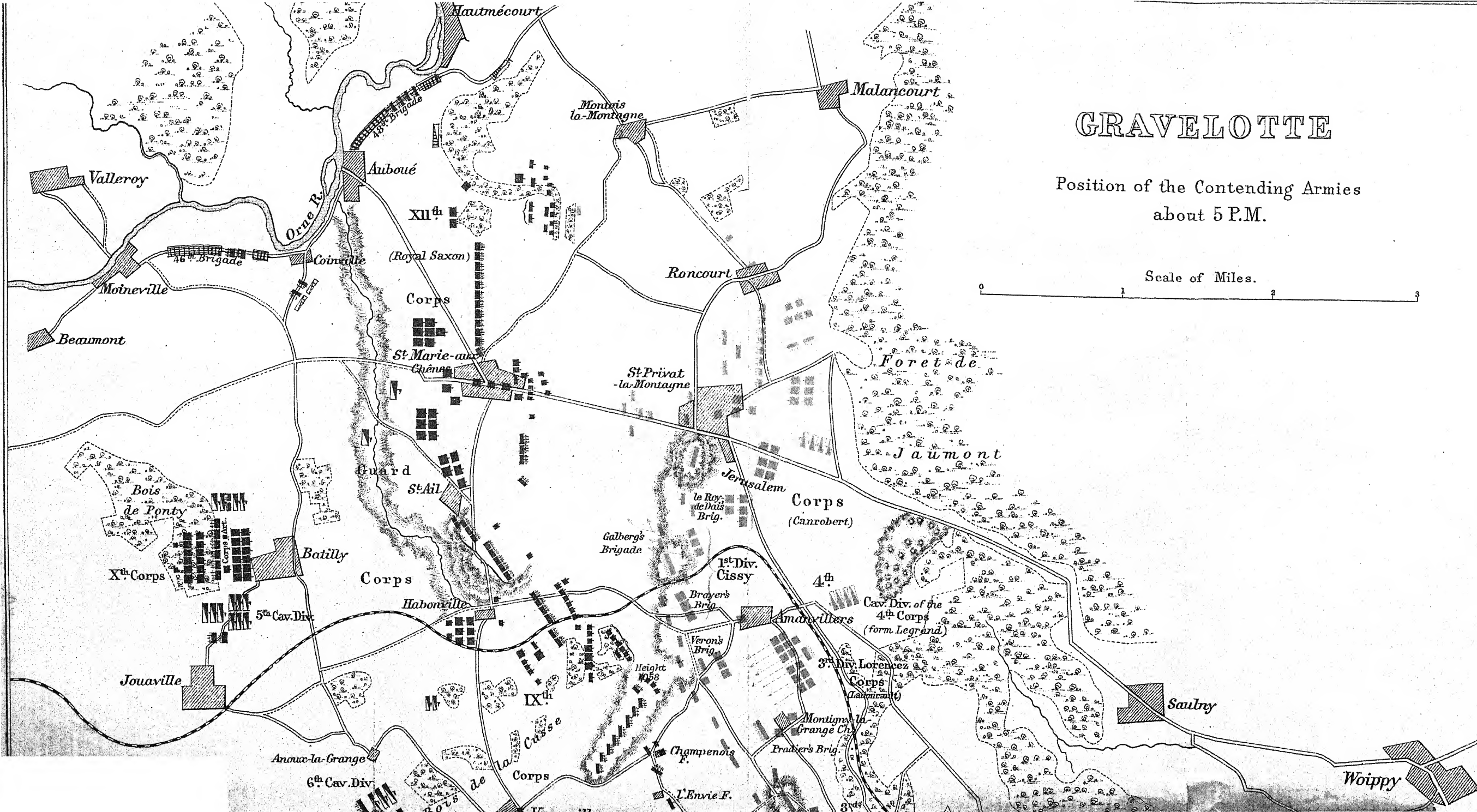
We notice at the commencement of the action that

Cavalry as  
a protec-  
tion to  
artillery.

the German artillery was left in an exposed situation west of Vionville without protection, the cavalry being unable to maintain an equally forward position. Again, in the evening, when an attack in force upon Rezonville was meditated, the artillery was compelled to fall back under the French infantry fire, while the cavalry, which should have protected the retreat, was unable to make any impression on the enemy, and retired without obtaining any satisfactory result. It would appear from this and similar instances recorded during the Franco-German War, that it is a necessity of modern warfare for artillery to be able to act on occasion independently of escort. The German leaders seem to have thoroughly understood this principle, and almost every battle brings to light some instance of a brilliant success achieved on the part of the Germans, by boldly pushing their artillery to the front when occasion required.

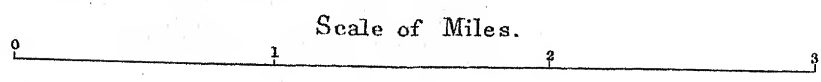
Employ-  
ment of  
artillery.

The artillery on both sides was, as a rule, employed in masses, and with good results. The most striking feature in the employment of the German artillery, was the bold initiative which it assumed unsupported by the other arms, and the marvellous tenacity with which it held on to advanced positions under infantry fire.

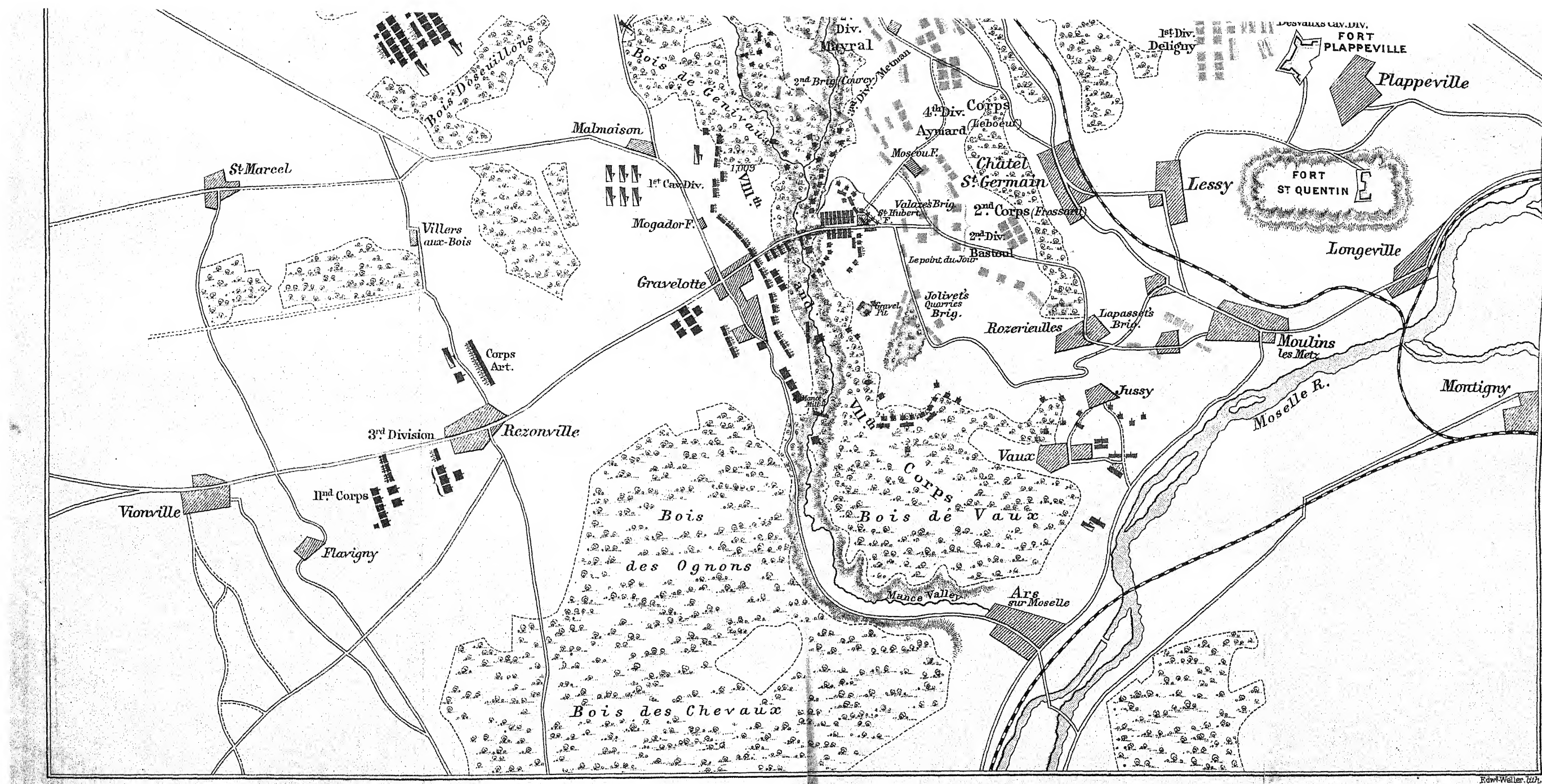


# GRAVELOTTE

Position of the Contending Armies  
about 5 P.M.









## BATTLE OF GRAVELOTTE, AUGUST 18TH.

THE King of Prussia having formed the resolution at noon of the 17th of August to move forward the next day with his united forces, the following order was issued to the Commanders-in-Chief of the First and Second Armies, at 2 p.m., from the Flavigny heights :—

“The Second Army will be formed at 5 a.m. to-morrow morning, the 18th, and advance in echelon from the left between the Yron and Gorze brooks (generally between Ville-sur-Yron and Rezonville). The Eighth Corps will accompany this movement on the right flank of the Second Army. Upon the Seventh Army Corps will devolve, in the first instance, the duty of protecting the movements of the Second Army against any hostile enterprises from the side of Metz. His Majesty's further arrangements will be dependent upon the measures of the enemy. Reports will for the present be sent to the heights south of Flavigny.”

These dispositions were conceived under the impression that the enemy might intend to retreat westwards, or, on the other hand, retire upon Metz, and were framed with a view to meeting either contingency.

By the evening of the 17th the German troops were extended along a front of eleven and a half miles, from Ars to Hannonville as follows :—

Seventh Corps	...	...	at Ars.
Eighth	”	...	” Gorze.

Position  
of the  
German  
First and  
Second  
Armies on  
the eve of  
the battle.

Ninth Corps	...	...	...	at Flavigny.
Third	"	...	...	" Vionville and Buxières.
Tenth	"	...	...	" Tronville.
Twelfth	"	...	...	" Puxieux and Mars-la-Tour.
Guard	"	...	...	" Hannonville.
Sixth Cavalry Division			...	" Flavigny.
Fifth	"	"	...	" Tronville.
Guard Cavalry Division (less the Lancer Brigade)			...	" Tronville and Hannonville.

Positions  
of the  
French  
Army on  
the eve of  
the battle.

During the 17th the French had occupied the following positions :—

On the extreme right wing between Roncourt and to the south of St. Privat la Montagne was the Sixth Corps.

Fourth Corps at Amanvillers.

Third Corps at La Folie, Leipzig, and Moscou.

Second Corps from Point du Jour to Rozerieulles.

Lapasset's Brigade of the Fifth Corps towards St. Ruffine.

General du Barail's cavalry regiments from Verneville were formed in rear of the right wing, east of St. Privat.

Forton's Cavalry Division in rear of the left wing at Longeau.

Guard Corps in reserve to the west of Forts St. Quentin and Plappeville.

Artillery reserve between these forts and the western suburbs of Metz.

Total strength of the Germans	...	...	203,000
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" " " French...	...	...	125,000
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During the day the French employed themselves in adding to the natural strength of their position by constructing shelter trenches, etc., and in front of the Second and Third Corps especially, a connected system of trenches and gunpits was completed before the close of the day. Homesteads such as Point du Jour, Moscou, and St. Hubert were converted into small forts.

Descrip-  
tion of the  
French  
position.

The French position lay in its whole extent upon an open and broad ridge, falling gently to the westward, and in parts with the smoothness of a glacis, lending itself to the full effect of artillery and musketry fire. The *left* wing had, moreover, a special support in the close proximity of Fort St. Quentin, while the Moselle valley offered a secure *appui* for the left flank, the

approach of the enemy in front being rendered difficult by the Mance brook. In this part of the field, however, the communications to the rear were insufficient in the event of defeat. The *right* wing was *en l'air* in the neighbourhood of St. Privat la Montagne, and as there was no engineer park with the Sixth Corps it had been impossible to construct any artificial protection such as was necessary, between Roncourt and the impassable Bois de Jaumont. Such conditions would have naturally led to the posting of the reserves in rear of the *right* flank; but Marshal Bazaine seems to have been pursued by the same apprehensions for his *left* wing which led him on the field of Mars-la-Tour to commit the blunder of nursing his reserves in a part of the field where they were never required, instead of using them to support a vigorous offensive movement against the Prussian Third Corps. The extent of the French front was seven miles.

*Proceedings of the Germans on the morning of the  
18th of August.*

In accordance with the information received during the early morning, the movements of the various corps had been modified, more or less, from the original dispositions made by the King on the previous day. The general tenor of the King's order had, however, been carried out, and by 9 a.m. the following positions had been taken up:—

Position  
of the  
Germans  
at 9 a.m.

Main body of the Seventh Corps assembling to the south of Gravelotte, with the outposts on the eastern margin of the Bois de Vaux, in close proximity to the enemy.

Eighth Corps at Villers aux Bois and Rezonville, fronting north-east.

Ninth Corps at Caulre farm. (Advanced parties of the Eighth and Ninth Corps were pushed forward in the direction of the Bois des Genivaux and Verneville.)

The Guard Corps had just reached Mars-la-Tour on its way to Doncourt.

Twelfth Corps forming up at Jarny.

Third Corps at Vionville.

Tenth preparing to move off from Tronville.

The Fifth and Sixth Cavalry Divisions at Tronville and Vionville ; the Saxon cavalry on the high-road west of Jarny.

After nine o'clock, considerable movement was observed in the French Army, which was taken for a partial withdrawal of their forces. This movement was, however, in reality caused by the enemy taking up positions, mostly well screened, in preparation for the expected attack.

German  
disposi-  
tions,  
10.30 a.m.

By 10.30 a.m., however, more accurate information had been obtained by the scouts and advanced troops, and the following directions were in consequence despatched to the head-quarters of the Second Army :—

“From reports received, it may be assumed that the enemy intends to hold his position between Point du Jour and Montigny la Grange. Four French battalions have moved into the Bois des Genivaux. His Majesty is of opinion that it will be desirable to move off the Twelfth and Guard Corps in the direction of Batilly, so as, in the event of the enemy retreating upon Briey, to meet him at Ste. Marie aux Chênes ; or, in the event of his remaining on the height, to attack him from Amanvillers. The attack should take place simultaneously ; by the First Army from the Bois de Vaux and Grave-lotte, by the Ninth Corps against the Bois des Genivaux and Verneville, by the left wing of the Second Army from the north.”

With regard to the First Army, it was decided that it should not attack until the Second Army on its left flank had gone further in advance and was in readiness to co-operate. These instructions reached the head-quarters of the First Army soon after 11 a.m. The

general offensive plan of the supreme authorities was thus made on the assumption that the French right did not extend beyond Amanvillers.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army had meanwhile initiated a change of front to the right of the Ninth and Guard Corps, and with this object had despatched orders at 10 a.m. to the Ninth Corps to advance in the direction of Verneville and La Folie, and in the event of the enemy's right wing being in position there to open the attack with the deployment of a large force of artillery. The Guard Corps was instructed to continue its march upon Doncourt and Verneville, and to take up a position there for the support of the Ninth Corps. It was intended to draw the Third Corps forward to Caulre farm, the Twelfth to remain for the present at Jarny.

The orders of the King reached the head-quarters of the Second Army at 11 a.m., and in accordance with these orders and later intelligence which had been received, the following modifications were made in the dispositions:—

In the event of the enemy's right flank extending further northward, the Ninth Corps was instructed to delay its attack on La Folie until the Guard could take part from Amanvillers. The latter corps was to hasten its march through Verneville, making, so far as was practicable, a circuitous movement by Habonville, and then in concert with the Ninth Corps to attack the enemy's right flank by way of Amanvillers. The Twelfth Corps received orders to advance to Ste. Marie aux Chênes; its cavalry was to be employed partly to endeavour to penetrate into the Moselle valley in order to interrupt the line of telegraph and railway between Metz and Thionville, and partly to secure the German flank towards the west. In second line the Tenth Corps.

was to follow to St. Ail ; the Third Corps to move from Vionville to Verneville. The Second Corps to move up to Rezonville as a general reserve to the right wing of the line of battle.

While still engaged in expediting these movements, the first cannon shots resounded from Verneville towards 12 a.m., announcing the commencement of the engagement by the Ninth Corps.

The King of Prussia immediately despatched the following order to General von Steinmetz, commanding the First Army :—

“The separate action in front of Verneville now audible does not necessitate the general attack of the First Army. The latter should not show any large force ; in case of necessity, merely the artillery for the preparation of its subsequent attack.”

The mission of the First Army was therefore to maintain a delaying action against the strong front of the enemy's left wing, while the Second Army developed a simultaneous front and flank attack against the French right wing.

### *The Battle up to 5 p.m.*

Engage-  
ment of  
the Ninth  
German  
Army  
Corps.

The officer commanding the Ninth Corps had received instructions to attack the enemy's position *if his right wing were resting on La Folie*. During the advance of the corps between Verneville and Amanvillers, General von Manstein became aware that the French right extended considerably beyond La Folie ; but being determined not to lose the chance of *surprising* the enemy, he resolved to attack at once.

At first, only the battery of the advanced guard was at hand. It unlimbered at 11.45 a.m. on the height east of Verneville, and opened fire on the French camp. The

other batteries, as they came up, were ordered to advance to the southern part of the long spur (1058).

The first rounds had alarmed the entire French line, and the troops hastened to occupy the positions assigned to them.

The troops which had thus been suddenly disturbed by the German cannonade, were those of the French Fourth Corps, which immediately deployed for battle, Cissey's Division, in two lines, occupying the right wing on both sides of the railway and opposite the Bois de la Cusse. To its left, at Amanvillers and Montigny la Grange, was drawn up Grenier's Division, also in two lines, the front line pressing forward at once to Champenois farm. Lorencz's Division was retained at Amanvillers. The artillery was at the commencement brought into the front line, some batteries of the Third Corps forming up on the left. Detachments of infantry of the latter corps occupied the Bois des Genivaux in considerable force. Batteries of the Sixth Corps also came into action to the south of St. Privat, to the right of the Fourth Corps.

The German artillery now found itself in a difficult position. Exposed to a concentric fire from the French batteries, which were almost impossible to hit in return, taken in enfilade on the left flank, and in reverse from the batteries of the French right wing, and almost annihilated by the deadly musketry fire, the German artillery, though sore pressed, held their ground with unswerving steadiness.

Situation  
of the  
German  
artillery on  
spur (1058)  
at 12.30.

In order to afford some protection to the hard-pressed batteries on the spur, some battalions of infantry had been sent forward against the Bois de la Cusse and L'Envie farm. The latter place was taken, after a sharp fight, about 12.30 a.m., and maintained against repeated counter-attacks of the enemy, though not without severe

losses. The companies which had been sent to attack the Bois de la Cusse advanced under a heavy fire until they reached the spot where the railway embankment cuts the north-eastern copse. Posting themselves behind the embankment, they immediately became engaged in a vigorous action with the skirmishers of Cisse's Division. A part of one company at the same time became engaged in the copse towards Amanvillers. Meanwhile, at 12.15 a.m., the main body of the Eighteenth Division was arriving at Verneville, and two battalions were immediately sent forward to the support of the artillery, and, towards 1 p.m., one battalion succeeded in reaching the railway embankment and occupied the side of it towards St. Privat. The embankment being enfiladed in its whole length by the enemy's musketry fire, afforded but little cover, and the companies engaged at this point soon became visibly attenuated. The other battalion had at first become engaged on the east face of the Bois de la Cusse, but subsequently retired into the clearing in the centre, and formed a reserve to the fighting line.

Combat  
at Chan-  
trenne.

Meanwhile, three battalions of the advanced guard had succeeded in occupying Chantrenne, but were quite unable to advance to the attack of La Folie owing to the heavy artillery and musketry fire which swept the open intervening space. Chantrenne was put in a state of defence; a dash was made upon the edge of the wood which projects towards the south of the farm, but the French soon drove their assailants back, and at 1 p.m. the contest resolved itself into a hard-fought stationary action.

1 p.m.

Develop-  
ment of  
the action  
with the  
Ninth  
Corps

The artillery on the spur south of the Bois de la Cusse was by this time in a most precarious state. A mitrailleuse battery had advanced from Amanvillers, and had come into action at the most effective range



opposite the left flank of the Prussian line of guns. The 4th Heavy Battery on the left flank had lost five <sup>up to</sup> <sub>2 p.m.</sub> gun commanders and forty men; and in spite of the desperate efforts of the battery commander, who was himself wounded, the French succeeded in capturing four of its guns. The remaining batteries on the spur continued to maintain the action against the superior positions and numbers of the enemy until, at 2 p.m., they ran short of ammunition, and, owing to the difficulty of replenishing it, found themselves barely able to continue the struggle.

At the scene of action of the Eighteenth Division, the following was the situation towards 2 p.m.: The combined divisional and corps artillery on the long ridge between Verneville and Amanvillers, was still maintaining its position, although with considerable difficulty since the annihilation of the left flank battery. L'Envie farm in advance of the front had been occupied, but Champenois was still in the enemy's hands. Of the infantry only six battalions had as yet been engaged. The parts of the Bois de la Cusse nearest the enemy were held by two battalions and two companies of the 30th; two more companies of the same regiment were defending L'Envie, while the other two battalions were engaged in a stationary action at Chantrenne; the remainder of the Eighteenth Division was at Verneville, the 6th Dragoons being to the south-east of that place in the Bois des Genivaux. General  
situation  
of the  
Eighteenth  
Division at  
2 p.m.

Between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. the whole of the Hessian field artillery came into action on the flat ridge east of Habonville on both sides of the railway cutting, fronting north-east.

In front of this position stood nearly the whole of Cissey's Division of the French Fourth Corps, while next to it, on both sides of St. Privat, the Sixth Corps.

was in the act of deploying. The batteries of Cissey's Division directed their guns principally against the Hessian Artillery, while those of the Sixth Corps, which had hitherto been also firing in the same direction, found themselves compelled to direct their fire against the Guard Corps moving up to St. Ail; the artillery of the Guard having already taken up a position south-east of St. Ail fronting in almost the same direction as the Hessian batteries.

The positions occupied by the Ninth Corps at 2 p.m. resolved themselves into two extensive artillery lines and two separately engaged bodies of infantry. Of the former, one was south of the Bois de la Cusse, with its front towards the south-east. These nine batteries held their positions with difficulty against the French artillery to the south of Amanvillers and Montigny la Grange. The other line, consisting of the five Hessian field-batteries, were east of Habonville, fronting north-east against the heights of St. Privat. Between these divergent lines of fire of the German artillery lay the village of Amanvillers, almost untouched by the fire. Of the engaged bodies of infantry, the smaller was on the right wing in the neighbourhood of Chantrenne and L'Envie; the larger in the Bois de la Cusse, between the two artillery lines. A general reserve of the entire line of battle of the Ninth Corps was formed of the battalions of the Eighteenth Division still remaining at Verneville.

Continuation of the struggle in the vicinity of the Bois de la Cusse.

On the approach of the fusilier battalion of the 85th Regiment from Verneville to the left flank of the artillery line on the spur, the officer commanding, recognizing the position of imminent danger in which the guns were placed by the proximity of the enemy's infantry at Champenois farm, and perceiving at the same time away beyond the left flank that hostile infantry were preparing to renew their attack on the

batteries, ordered his men to advance against the latter. Exposed in the open to the overwhelming cross-fire of the enemy, the fusilier battalion was unable to hold its ground long. In twenty minutes the assailants had lost nearly half their force, and were compelled to retire fighting behind the ridge. The commanding officer and 11 other officers, together with 400 men, were killed or wounded in this brief struggle.

The advance of the enemy's infantry against the batteries had, however, been staved off for the moment by this reckless expenditure of life.

At 2.30 p.m. the corps artillery had to be withdrawn in order to effect necessary repairs; this was carried out by batteries, and the movement was joined in by the 2nd Heavy Battery, leaving only in front of the original line of guns the three batteries of the previous right wing. The withdrawal of the before-mentioned batteries was completed by 3 p.m.\* Five ammunition and store waggons had to be left behind, and the 2nd Heavy Battery was unable to come into action again during the day. The Hessian horse artillery battery had been forced to abandon its position to the east of Verneville, and after replenishing its ammunition was ordered to take up its position on the south-western slope of the ridge to the right front of the three Prussian batteries. A cannonade was now directed by all four batteries against the Champenois homestead, from which

\* The losses on the left wing of the artillery line were as follows :—

Staff of Corps Artillery and Second Field Division, <sup>five</sup> ~~four~~ officers, *including* two surgeons.

2nd H. A. Battery, 2 officers, 36 men, 102 horses.

3rd Light	...	2	"	24	"	47	"
4th "	...	2	"	27	"	48	"
3rd Heavy	...	3	"	32	"	54	"
4th "	...	3	"	45	"	49	"
2nd "	...	1	"	23	"	70	"

the most persistent annoyance had been caused by the enemy's infantry fire; flames were soon rising above the farm buildings. Meanwhile, L'Envie farm had been captured and some of the troops moving upon that place were diverted towards Champenois, and succeeded in capturing it at 4.30 p.m. The capture of Champenois secured to a certain extent the front of the artillery line; upon the left flank a firmer position had also been secured, by the occupation of the knoll (1058) southwest of Amanvillers, after a bloody and protracted struggle.

Capture of  
Champenois and  
L'Envie.

Continuation of the  
struggle  
at Chantrenne.

The artillery south of the Bois de la Cusse was now able to collect again in greater force. On the extreme right flank at Chantrenne, no important change had taken place since 2 p.m. As we have seen, an attempt had already been made to drive the French out of the Bois des Genivaux at this point, with a view to advancing upon La Folie, but without success. This attempt was renewed upon the arrival of reinforcements, the edge of the wood was carried, and a dash made across the open space which intervened between the Prussian position and the copse in front of La Folie; this bold attempt, however, only resulted in heavy losses, and the assailants with difficulty regained the cover of the northern edge of the Bois des Genivaux. Attempts were also made to gain ground in the wood in a southerly direction, but without success; and at 4 p.m., with strength and ammunition almost expended, four companies were with difficulty maintaining Chantrenne and the northern edge of the wood.

Progress of  
the fight  
on the left  
wing of the  
Ninth  
Corps.

Meanwhile the batteries of the Twenty-fifth (Hessian) Division had maintained the struggle east of Habonville with unabated energy, though suffering heavily from the front fire of the French artillery combined with the flank fire of the hostile infantry. The adversary

had several times endeavoured to press forward to assault the Hessian position, but on each occasion had been driven back by the fire of the infantry ensconced behind the railway embankment and in the borders of the Bois de la Cusse. Though there could no longer be any question of a *simultaneous* attack by the Guards and Ninth Corps, yet it was important that the two corps should act in concert; and with this object in view the Twenty-fifth Division had been held in readiness until the attack of the Guard Corps should be developed.

Shortly after 3.30 p.m. Prince Louis of Hesse remarked a forward movement of German troops through Ste. Marie, and believed that this indicated the beginning of the attack of the Guard upon St. Privat. In order to support it in the manner prescribed by General von Manstein commanding the Ninth Corps, the Prince deputed three battalions to attack in that direction. These troops were therefore brought up to the railway embankment, in places fifteen feet high and much obstructed by a barricade of carts and wire entanglement. Severe losses were sustained in surmounting these obstacles, but connection was soon formed with other detachments from the Bois de la Cusse, and a strong line of attack was formed to the north of the railway, which offered an excellent screen to the Hessian batteries against the skirmishers of Cissey's Division, which occupied a hollow on the opposite heights at a distance of about fifteen hundred paces.

Advance  
of the  
Hessians  
across the  
railway.

The movement against Ste. Marie having by this time apparently come to a standstill, no further advance was made for the present by the Hessians.

In the Bois de la Cusse the situation in general remained unaltered.

In accordance with verbal instructions from the~

Arrival of  
the artil-  
lery of the  
Third  
Corps.

Commander-in-Chief, the Third Corps had moved off from Vionville at 1 p.m., in order to serve as a reserve to the Ninth Corps at Verneville. The corps artillery was ordered to advance with its four field batteries to reinforce the Ninth Corps and take up a position at Verneville.

In pursuance of these orders, the corps artillery hastened to the scene of action; the corps commander also sent forward the two horse artillery batteries to support the left flank of the divisional artillery of the Eighteenth Division, and by 4 p.m. on the field of battle to the south of the Bois de la Cusse, there were 58 German guns in action. These were shortly joined by the batteries which had temporarily retired from the spur to effect repairs, and by 4.15 p.m. there were twelve German batteries in action. A visible effect was now produced on the batteries of the enemy, while the hostile infantry were so shattered by the long and hard-fought struggle in which it had been engaged, that by 4.30 p.m. the infantry contest waned at all points, and the German artillery contented itself with firing when a favourable object presented itself.

Situation  
of Ninth  
Corps at  
5 p.m.

The scene of action of the Ninth Corps consequently presented the following general appearance at 5 p.m.

Along a line commencing south-east of Verneville and continuing to the south of the Bois de la Cusse were thirteen batteries in action. To the north of the wood stood the Hessian field artillery which had just been joined by a battery of the corps artillery; consequently, in all, nineteen batteries, with 106 guns in action. A detachment composed of troops of both divisions was engaged in the Bois de la Cusse. On the ridge south-west of Amanvillers one Hessian battalion covered the left flank of the artillery front. North of the railway embankment, and in advance of the front of the Hessian batteries were

six companies of the Forty-ninth Brigade, the remainder of the brigade, together with the 4th Regiment, being posted south of the embankment as a general reserve to the Hessian Division. One battalion occupied Champenois, and two companies were in L'Envie. In the neighbourhood of Chantrenne were four battalions and three companies of rifles. Three battalions were in and about Verneville. The 6th Dragoons were on the right wing behind the north-west angle of the Bois des Genivaux; the Hessian Cavalry Brigade on the left wing behind the Bois de la Cusse. To the south-west of Verneville, the two infantry divisions of the Third Army Corps, and on their left the Sixth Cavalry Division formed a general reserve. To the right of the Ninth Corps, the First Army had already commenced the struggle in the first hour after noon and held fast the enemy in that part of the field. On the left, in immediate contact, was the Guard Corps, which in conjunction with the Saxons had commenced to outflank the French right wing.

*Movements on the Left Wing of the Second Army and  
Capture of Ste. Marie aux Chênes.*

As an abandonment of the struggle commenced by the Ninth Corps was not practicable, it was necessary to fit it in as far as possible with the general plan of attack, it being now evident that the French right wing extended considerably beyond Amanvillers.

Due regard being paid to the reinforcement of the Ninth Corps by placing one brigade of the Guard Corps at its disposal, the remainder of the latter corps commenced a flanking attack upon St. Privat under the supposition that the enemy's extreme right wing rested there.

Prince August of Wurtemberg had reached the neigh-





bourhood of Habonville at 1 p.m., and had there seen the enemy's position at St. Privat and observed the constant arrival of fresh batteries at that point, and had already made arrangements for joining in the struggle on the left of the Ninth Corps.

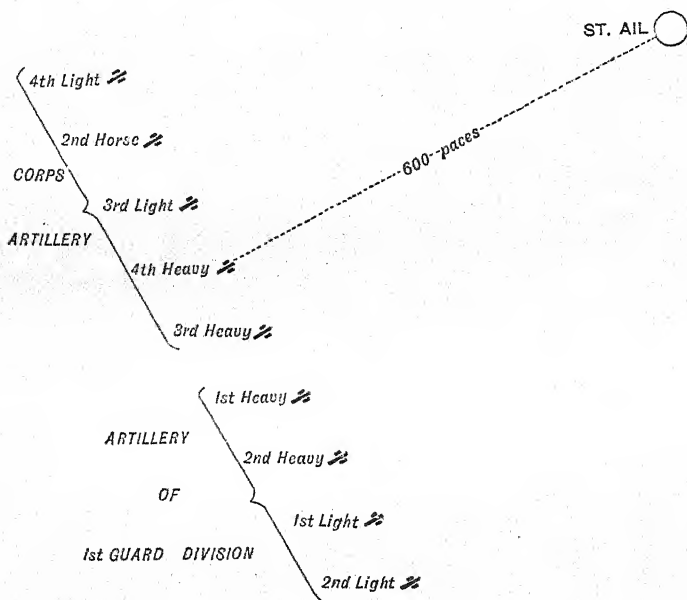
The Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army communicated verbal instructions to the Prince not to push on his infantry until the Twelfth Corps, then on the march to Ste. Marie and Moineville, should be making effective progress. At 3 p.m. the Commander-in-Chief received the following report from Batilly :—

“The Saxon Army Corps is advancing with the Twenty-fourth Division upon Ste. Marie aux Chênes, and will outflank with the Twenty-third Division the French right wing by way of Coinville and the woods between this village and Roncourt.”

Arrival  
of the  
advanced  
guard of  
the Guard  
Corps at  
Habon-  
ville,  
12.45 p.m.

The four advanced guard batteries of the First Guard Infantry Division, on arrival at Habonville at 12.45 p.m., were ordered to open fire on the French batteries in order to cover the advance of the division upon Ste. Marie. The batteries therefore took up a position on a gentle ridge south-west of Habonville, and fired the first round before 1 p.m. This position, however, proving unfavourable the batteries crossed the railway-cutting, upon the slopes of which wire entanglements had been prepared, at a gallop, and took up a second position to the south-west of St. Ail. The corps artillery (five batteries) reached the railway while this movement was being executed, and joining in it, took up a position with its left wing resting six hundred paces south-west of St. Ail and its right flank appuyed on the edge of the valley to the north-west of Habonville. Thus at this point nine batteries with 54 guns were in action south of St. Ail.

Com-  
mence-  
ment of  
the action  
by the  
artillery.



At a distance of one thousand paces in front of this artillery line strong bodies of French skirmishers kept up an increasing fire, and prevented any further advance; the enemy also showed himself at St. Ail and Ste. Marie. The Prussian batteries at first directed their attention to the French artillery on the heights of St. Privat, forcing the latter to draw off its fire from the Ninth Corps in order to keep this fresh line of guns in check.

The advance of the Guard Corps, thus prepared by the artillery, led towards the positions of the French Sixth Corps.

The front of the French position on the ridge which forms the summit of the glacis-like slope in front of the French Sixth Corps was exceedingly strong. The massively built village of St. Privat, surrounded to a great extent by high walls, formed the central point of

*Description of the position of the French Sixth Corps.*

*appui*, and was not in any way strengthened by artificial works.

Against the fire of the French artillery and infantry, which freely swept the sloping plain to the westward, the only cover that an assailant could find was in the villages of St. Ail and Ste. Marie. West of these villages the long ravine which has already been alluded to formed an excellent rallying point under cover from the enemy's fire.

The Sixth French Corps, 32,000 strong, was posted as follows :—

Between Roncourt and St. Privat were De Villier's Division and Péchot's Brigade of Tixier's Division. St. Privat and the ground to the west and south of it was held by Le Vassor-Sorval's Division with the 9th Regiment of Bisson's Division, and Le Roy de Dais' Brigade of Tixier's Division. On the left the Sixth Corps was in connection with Cisse's Division of the Fourth Corps, from which large detachments took part against the subsequent attack of the Prussian Guard Corps. To the east of St. Privat were posted four cavalry regiments, under General du Barail, in a position of readiness. The artillery reserve of the Sixth Corps had not yet come up ; but from various sources the corps could muster 74 guns, of which 60 were on the right wing to the north and east of St. Privat, and the remaining 14 to the south. In concert with them at this part of the field worked 12 guns and six mitrailleuses of Cisse's Division, so that altogether there were about 40,000 men and 92 guns available for the defence of this very strong position.

About the time when the batteries of the Prussian Guard were moving into position, the infantry of the advanced guard reached the neighbourhood of Habonville, and there came within range of the French guns. The village was immediately occupied by one battalion

of the advanced guard took the direction of St. Ail, marching along the ravine running south-west of that place. The village was taken after a brief skirmish with the enemy. The occupation of St. Ail secured the exposed left flank of the line of guns, which had hitherto been much harassed by the enemy's sharp-shooters. Much annoyance was experienced from the long-range fire of the French skirmishers in front of St. Privat, and it was evident that no further advance could be made until Ste. Marie was taken. In order to prepare the attack upon this strong village, the battalions of the advanced guard deployed to the south and west of Ste. Marie along the ravine.

On the French side a regiment of De Villier's Division had been pushed forward to Ste. Marie about noon. The skirts of the village and the outlying fences had been occupied, but little had been done to put the place in a proper state of defence.

The main body of the First Guard Infantry Division, which had meanwhile reached Habonville, was ordered to push on to the attack of Ste. Marie; and during the subsequent movement communication was established with the batteries of the Twenty-fourth Division which had just arrived to the west of Ste. Marie.

A combined attack from west and south was now made upon the village, during which reports were received which proved conclusively that Roncourt was occupied; and at 2 p.m. the following order was issued by the Crown Prince of Saxony:—

“The Twenty-third Division, at the disposal of which the Forty-sixth Brigade is once more placed, will take the road past Coinville, through the copse to the east of Auboué, in the direction of the Roncourt position. The Twenty-fourth Division will pass by the west of Batilly,

Attack of the Prussian Guard on Ste. Marie, and co-operation with the Twenty-fourth Division.

Order of the Crown Prince of Saxony, 2 p.m.

endeavour from that point to press forward directly towards Ste. Marie aux Chênes. The Forty-eighth Brigade will remain at the disposal of the corps commander in rear of Batilly copse."

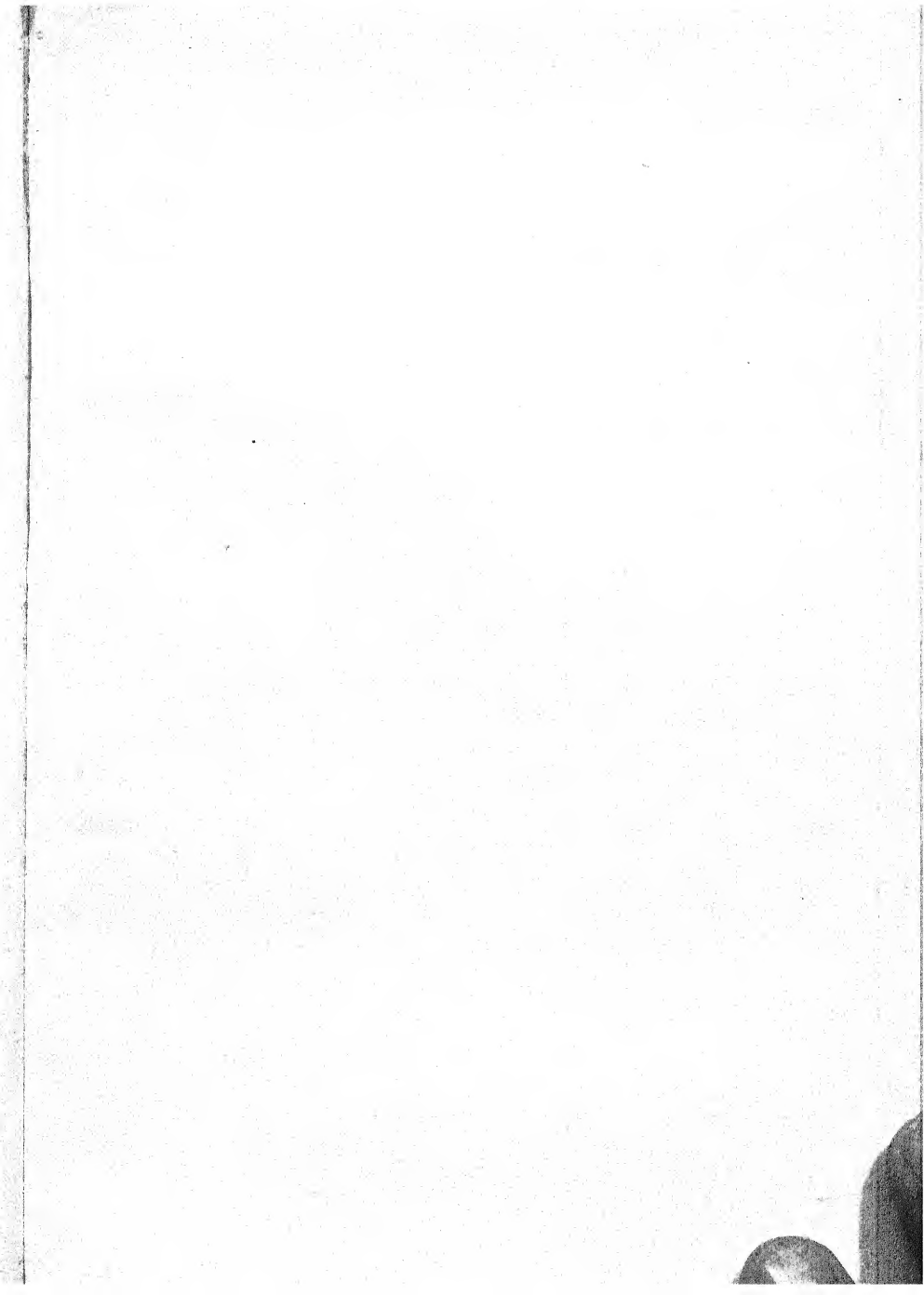
Information as to the intended movement was despatched to army head-quarters and also to the Ninth Corps at 2.30 p.m.

Move-  
ments  
of the  
Twelfth  
Saxon  
Corps.

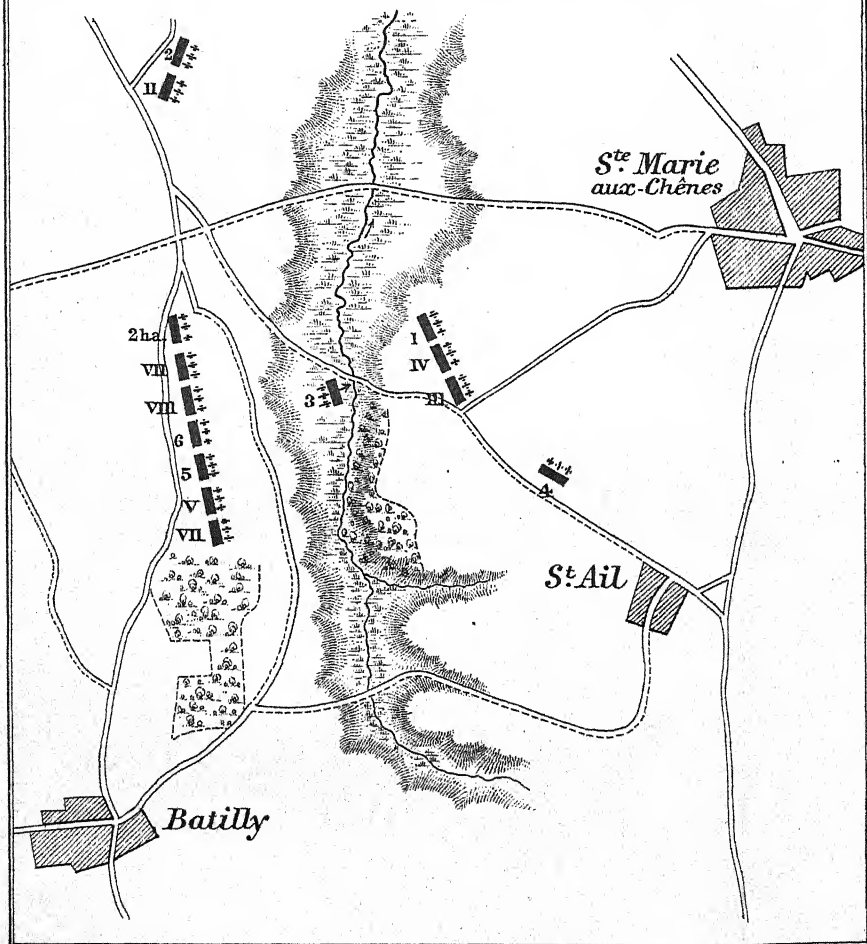
At this time the Forty-fifth Brigade were in occupation of the Bois de Ponty, the Forty-sixth Brigade being still north of Jarny. The commander of the Twenty-third Division, however, having learnt at 1.30 p.m. that the enemy was posted at St. Privat and Roncourt, but that the neighbourhood of Auboué was unoccupied, had determined to move off at once with all his available troops in the direction of Ste. Marie aux Chênes. The officer commanding the advanced guard had also on his own responsibility withdrawn his troops from Valleroy across the Orne by way of Beaumont in order to move in the direction of the cannonade.

While the troops of the Twenty-third division were carrying out these movements, the order from corps head-quarters arrived prescribing a flanking movement through Auboué, and this place was accordingly appointed as a rendezvous by Prince George of Saxony.

The Twenty-fourth Division received the orders from corps head-quarters at 2.15 p.m., just as the Forty-seventh Brigade leading the advance had arrived to the eastward of Batilly. This brigade now entered the bottom which stretches away to the west of Ste. Marie, and took up a position on both sides of the road leading from that village to the Bois de Ponty. The Forty-eighth Brigade remained near Batilly at the disposal of the corps commander. The artillery of the division came into action to the west of Ste. Marie shortly before 3 p.m. Mean-



# Position of the SAXON BATTERIES FACING S<sup>TE</sup> MARIE.

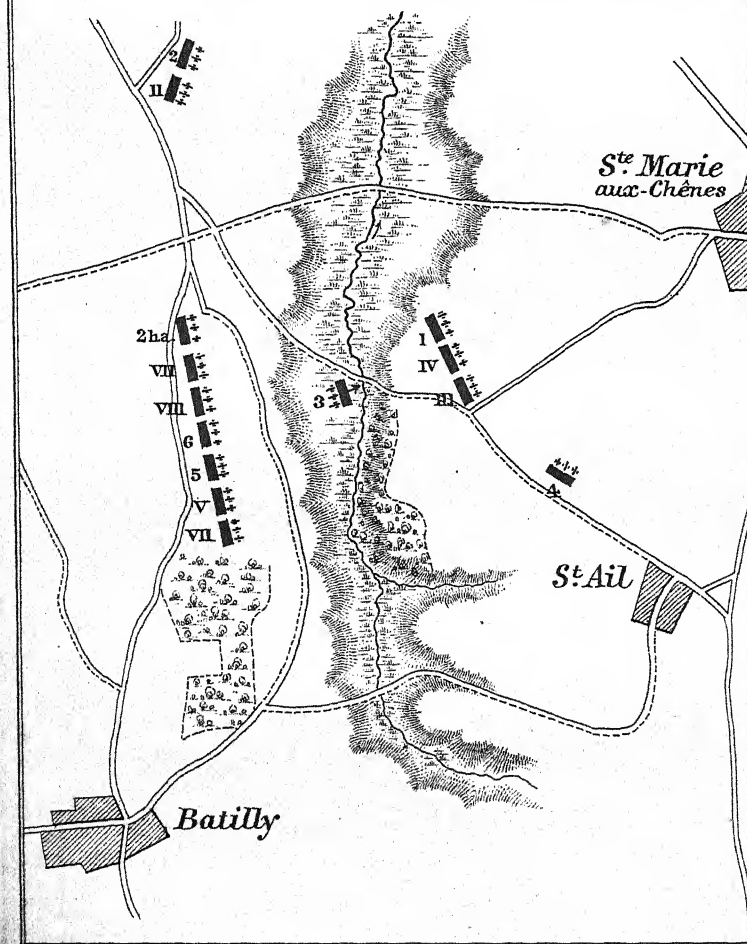






Sketch

Position of the  
SAXON BATTERIES FACING S<sup>TE</sup> MARIE.



seven batteries along the road which leads from Batilly to Auboué. the Saxon artillery.

Three batteries of the Twenty-third Division had previously come into action on the heights to the west of the Batilly valley; these batteries now took up fresh positions in order to co-operate more effectually in the attack on Ste. Marie.

As soon as the attack had been sufficiently prepared by the artillery, a combined assault upon Ste. Marie was made by the First Guard Infantry Division from the south and south-west, and by the Saxons from the west and north-west.

As soon as the attacking line was set in motion, the fire of the defenders increased in intensity, but without responding to it the assailants rushed forward upon the common goal, and by 3.30 p.m., after some sharp fighting, the village was in the hands of the Germans. Capture of Ste. Marie. Some hundreds of prisoners were taken in the village.

The late defenders retired towards Roncourt, pursued by troops of the Saxon Corps. The village was immediately put in a state of defence, and reinforcements rapidly brought up to aid in holding the important point just won, and to push forward the attack against St. Privat.

Up till 4.30 p.m. the enemy continued to make vigorous attempts to recover the lost village, but by 4 p.m. their artillery had been almost silenced, and the flanking fire of the Guard Corp artillery helped most effectually to render the onslaughts of the French infantry abortive.

Between 4.30 p.m. and 5.0 p.m. the conflict in this part of the field came to a standstill, no further advance in front being desirable until the Saxon Corps should have had time to develop the flank attack on the French right wing. With this object in view the following orders were issued:—

"The Forty-eighth Brigade reinforced by the First Cavalry Division and three batteries of the First Field Division will advance through Montois upon Roncourt. The Forty-fifth Brigade will drive the enemy entirely out of the wood, and will move forward from the west upon Roncourt, as soon as the Forty-eighth Brigade shall have made good its advance from the north. The disposal of the Forty-Sixth Brigade is reserved."

Situation  
of the  
Twelfth  
Corps at  
5 p.m.

The Forty-seventh Brigade was at Ste. Marie aux Chênes.\* The bulk of the artillery was in a line along the road from Ste. Marie to Hautmécourt. The Forty-fifth Brigade was pressing forward in skirmishing order into the copses between Auboué and Roncourt. The Forty-sixth Brigade, with the 1st Heavy Battery following in rear, had reached the neighbourhood between Moineville and Coinville. The Forty-eighth Brigade with both light batteries of the Twenty-third Division, the First and Second Cavalry Divisions, and the still available parts of the Saxon Cavalry Division were engaged in executing the turning movement towards Montois, marching down the Orne valley.

Situation  
of the  
Guard  
Corps at  
5 p.m.

The First Guard Division at this time had occupied Ste. Marie with seven battalions, its other troops being to the west and south-west of that place. The Second Guard Division was only one brigade strong,† and was deploying at St. Ail, one battalion protecting the artillery between Habonville and the latter village. To the south of St. Ail were posted eight batteries, and to the north four batteries of the Guard Corps. The 2nd Lancers to the south-west, the hussars to the west of Ste. Marie; both brigades of the Division of Guard

\* The Forty-seventh Brigade was subsequently brought up to the southern edge of the copses between Auboué and Roncourt, in order to form a reserve to the corps.

† The other brigade had been placed under the orders of the general commanding the Ninth Corps.

Cavalry, with two horse artillery batteries were in reserve to the west of Batilly.

Between the Bois de la Cusse and the copses east of Auboué were 180 German guns in action ; viz. on the left twelve Saxon batteries, in the centre twelve batteries of the Guard, and on the right six batteries of the Ninth Corps. The French batteries in front of this formidable line were by this time almost silent, reserving their last efforts for the impending attack of the German infantry.

The Ninth Corps held the positions already described. There was now a pause all along the front of these three corps (Ninth, Guard, and Twelfth), while the left wing of the Saxons was executing the prescribed turning movement of the French right flank and rear towards Roncourt.

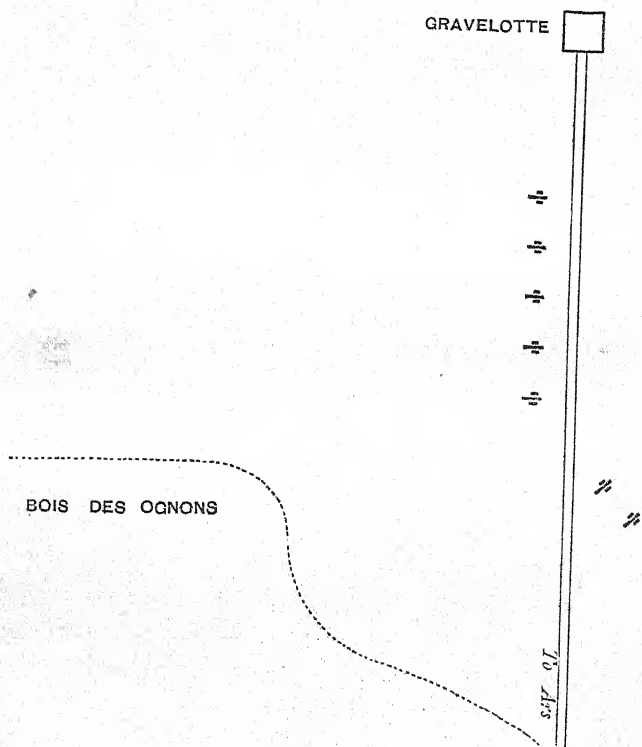
### *The Engagements of the First Army.*

During the forenoon the First Army had been in a position of readiness, awaiting the development of the struggle on the left ; the Seventh Corps in the neighbourhood of Gravelotte, the Eighth Corps in the neighbourhood of Villers aux Bois and Rezonville. When about noon the roar of artillery announced the commencement of the struggle by the Ninth Corps, the general commanding the Fifteenth Division led forward his troops across the Roman road with a view to taking up a covered position to the north of the main road and occupying Gravelotte. As soon as the heads of the division, after crossing the Roman road, became visible to the enemy, a vigorous but almost ineffectual fire was opened by the French batteries. In consequence of this, General von Steinmetz ordered the artillery of the Seventh Corps to come into action ; this was about 12.30 p.m. The batteries of the Fourteenth Division immediately came into position between Gravelotte and

the Bois des Ognons, and those of the Thirteenth Division followed at 1.15 p.m., extending the original line on both flanks.

At this time General von Steinmetz received the guiding directions from army head-quarters, issued after the commencement of the action at Verneville; these orders prescribed a delaying action for the First Army, at the same time permitting the preparation of the attack by the artillery, and were thus in accord with the measures already taken.

The Seven  
Batteries  
of the  
Seventh  
Corps at  
1.30 p.m.



Situation  
of the  
German  
Seventh  
Corps,  
2 p.m.

The protection of the artillery in action was afforded by the Fourteenth Division, and towards 2 p.m. the Twenty-seventh Brigade occupied the south-west of the village of Gravelotte. Three battalions occupied the edge

of the Bois de Vaux, to the south of the great quarries of Point du Jour; one battalion was to the north of the De Mance Mill, with its two flank companies pushed forward in a north-easterly direction to the edge of the wood. Two more battalions had also taken up positions in the wood to support these advanced troops; the De Mance Mill was also occupied by a battalion. On the right flank of the artillery were posted four battalions; both hussar regiments of the Seventh Corps were in a hollow south-west of Gravelotte; the corps artillery accompanied by one battalion, arrived on the plateau about this time (2 p.m.). The positions above indicated were retained by the Seventh Corps for some time without any important change.

Meanwhile, on the left the Eighth Corps had also taken up the cannonade. On the advance of the infantry of the Fifteenth Division, and the opening of a vigorous shell fire upon it by the French batteries, General von Goeben, commanding the corps, had ordered up the artillery at 12.45 p.m. to support the Ninth Corps on its left; the corps artillery was also brought into action. The Fifteenth Infantry Division deployed in the valley to the north of the Rezonville-Gravelotte road with the two infantry brigades in line on the right, the batteries in the centre, and the hussars on the left.

Supported by the fire of the guns, one brigade of the Fifteenth Division was now ordered to advance through Gravelotte along the main road, the other towards the Bois des Genivaux, whilst the Sixteenth Division was instructed to take up a position to the south-west of Gravelotte.

The open broadly swelling ridges between the Chatel and Mance valleys, upon which the First Army stood opposed to the left wing of the French army, falls gently towards the west, more steeply towards the east, thereby

Movements of the German Eighth Corps up to 2 p.m.

The scene of the engagement of the First Army.

affording the defender the double advantage of deriving the greatest possible effect from his fire in front, and, at the same time having his reserves close at hand, in a protected position. This part of the position had, moreover, been artificially strengthened.

On the summit of the ridge the farms of Moscou and Point du Jour had been arranged for defence, and connected by a carefully constructed system of shelter trenches, which stretched to the north and south between those points. The roads leading from the high-road to the Bois des Genivaux had been utilized for the formation of long lines of fire under cover of their high banks; the farm of St. Hubert formed a strongly fortified advanced post; the quarries and gravel pit, excellent points of support, and the entire western slope of the plateau could be brought under a concentrated fire from different points. The wood lying in front of the position and lining both sides of the deeply sunk Mance valley concealed the preparations of the assailants, and enabled them to bring up large bodies of men under cover.

In general, the French had limited themselves to an occupation of the edges of this wood, as the deep undergrowth rendered all unity in the command and movements impossible in the interior. This condition of the wood was also unfavourable to the assailant by confining him more or less to the roads. On the other hand, the broad Mance valley, the then dry and firm bottom of which could not be seen from the heights, offered a suitable point of assembly within the wood for an advance to the attack, or for rallying in the event of retreat.

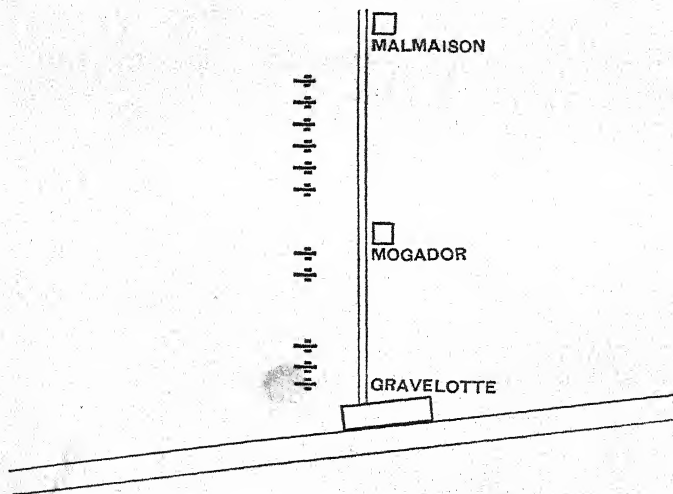
The great road from Gravelotte, the only passage of the valley suitable for all arms, leads down into it from both directions as a deeply sunken hollow way, and then crosses it in the form of a high masonry

embankment; this defile, fifteen hundred paces in length, was under fire from St. Hubert for nearly its whole extent as far as Gravelotte.

The French position was occupied as follows :—Leboeuf's Corps, with right wing at La Folie, extended through Leipzig to a point where the road takes a bend south of Moscou. The roads, converted into lines of fire, indicated the general front, while in advance was posted a regiment at St. Hubert. The batteries of the two divisions (Metman and Aymard) occupying this line were posted to the north and south of Moscou, and a mitrailleuse battery was placed in prolongation of the Gravelotte high-road. On the left of the Third Corps was the Second, under General Frossard, occupying the strongly fortified Point du Jour, lining the road ditches, and filling the adjacent quarries. The total strength of the French force opposed to the First German Army was about fifty battalions and 100 guns.

Towards 1 p.m. eleven batteries of the German Eighth Corps had come into action against the French batteries at Moscou and Point du Jour—

Position  
of the  
batteries  
of the  
Eighth  
German  
Corps,  
1 p.m.





This line of guns had its left flank secured by a battalion and three squadrons.

A general forward movement was now made by the infantry of the First Army, and after severe fighting at several points in the wood skirting the western slope, the valley was reached about 2.15 p.m. all along the line.

Development of the action by the First Army between 2 and 3 p.m.

At the point in the valley where the side ravine from La Folie enters it, the left flank of the Thirtieth Brigade immediately passed to the attack. Five companies succeeded, after hard fighting, in driving back the enemy from a strong walled enclosure in the ravine, while two battalions simultaneously crossing the open meadow land, pushed forward through the wood of the eastern slope without encountering any opposition, and found themselves at the point where the road from St. Hubert enters the wood. Their further advance was checked by a brisk fire from the direction of Moscou.

On the right flank of the Thirtieth Brigade a detachment succeeded in taking up a position in the open within two hundred and fifty paces of the farm buildings of St. Hubert, though not without sustaining heavy losses.

Shortly after this three companies succeeded in establishing themselves in some quarries near the high-road, and in company with other detachments opened fire upon St. Hubert at close range, without, however, being able to advance any further under the hail of bullets which poured from this strongly defended post.

While the infantry had been thus pressing forward across the Mance valley, the batteries of the Eighth Corps were moving up into positions from which they could more effectually aid the determined *attack* which had now developed all along the line, contrary to the wishes and plans of the Commander-in-Chief. Soon after 2 p.m. the batteries commenced moving forward

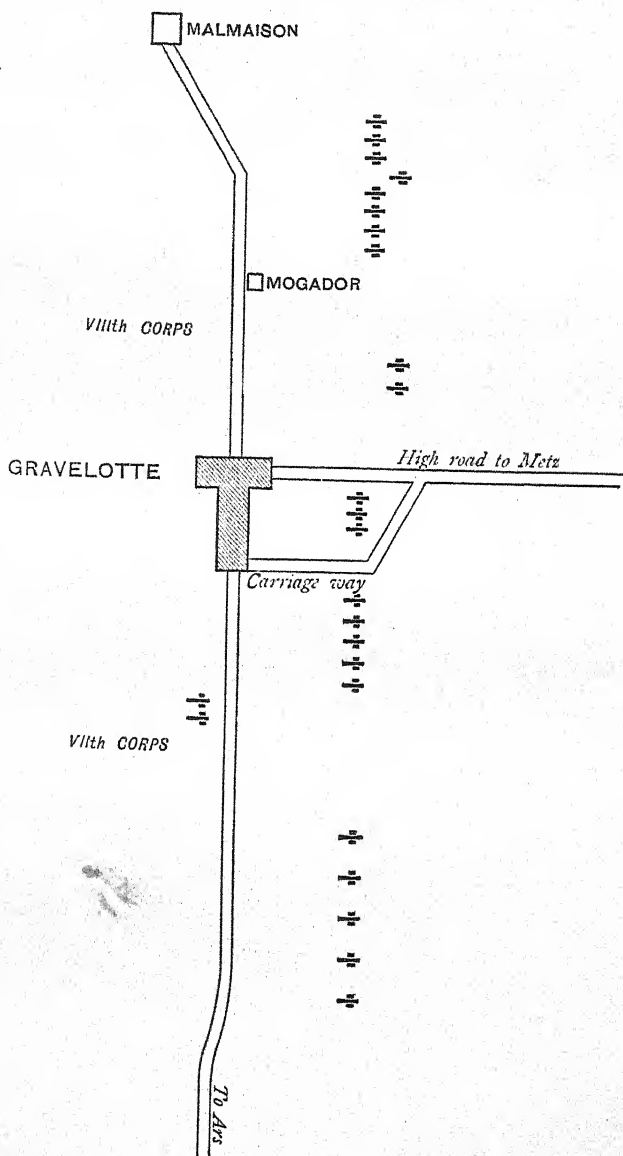
to more favourable positions *east* of the road running from Gravelotte to Malmaison; the knoll (1009) north-east of Mogador was crowned by five batteries, while the other batteries sought positions more or less in line with these. From these new positions the German artillery directed a visibly effective fire upon its previous points on the opposite plateau, and soon produced such an effect on the French batteries, that before long it was able to divert a considerable portion of its fire upon St. Hubert.

Shortly before 3 p.m., the troops of the Eighth Corps had advanced into the following positions:—The infantry of the Fifteenth Division was maintaining a slowly progressing struggle on the eastern edge of the Mance valley; the Twenty-ninth Brigade occupied the space between the gravel-pit lying west of Point du Jour and the high-road; the Thirtieth Brigade was closing round the farm of St. Hubert with its right wing, while its left wing extended as far as the bifurcation of the valley in the Bois des Genivaux. Between this wood and the Gravelotte-Malmaison road stood 72 guns in action, fronting north-east; while on the left flank of the guns, isolated detachments of both sides kept up an indecisive combat in the wood. Close to the wood, in a position of readiness, stood the King's Hussars, and west of Malmaison the entire First Cavalry Division. The Sixteenth Infantry Division was in the neighbourhood west of Gravelotte as general reserve. The village of Gravelotte had been put in a state of defence by a pioneer company.

Situation  
of the  
Eighth  
Corps at  
3 p.m.

The Eighth Corps was thus to a certain extent exposed on the left flank, owing to the connection with the Ninth Corps not having yet been established; on the right flank, however, direct connection with the Seventh Corps had been established.

Meanwhile the infantry of the Seventh Corps had



been to a great extent waiting on the Eighth Corps,

until a *simultaneous* forward movement could be made; the artillery, however, had taken up more advanced positions, and at this time formed a long line *south* of Gravelotte in continuation of the artillery line of the Eighth Corps to the north of that place.

Soon after 3 p.m., after desperate fighting and heavy losses, the German troops succeeded in obtaining possession of the strong French advanced post of St. Hubert. The slope of the plateau opposite Point du Jour was strongly occupied about the same time, and a firm footing gained in the wall position previously alluded to in the fork of the valley. The Germans had thus succeeded in establishing strong posts on the enemy's side of the valley, and the capture of St. Hubert formed an important bridgehead, the possession of which could not fail to exercise the greatest influence on the further success of the German arms in this part of the field.

Capture of St. Hubert and continuation of the action by the Fifteenth Division between 3 and 4 p.m.

In obtaining these important successes, the Fifteenth Division had expended nearly all its strength, and suffered heavily; moreover, its much exposed situation gave grounds for serious apprehension in the event of a determined counter-stroke on the part of the French.

The Commander-in-Chief of the First Army, perceiving that the French advanced posts had been captured all along the line, and that the fire of their artillery and infantry had visibly slackened, and, moreover, that batteries and troops were withdrawing out of action and moving to the rear, somewhat hastily came to the conclusion that the entire French left wing was on the point of retreating to Metz, and rashly gave orders for the advance of the First Cavalry Division and the batteries of the Seventh Corps across the valley, by the *single causeway* which connected the opposite sides of the deep ravine. The natural result of this

Advance of the First Cavalry Division and batteries of the Seventh Corps.

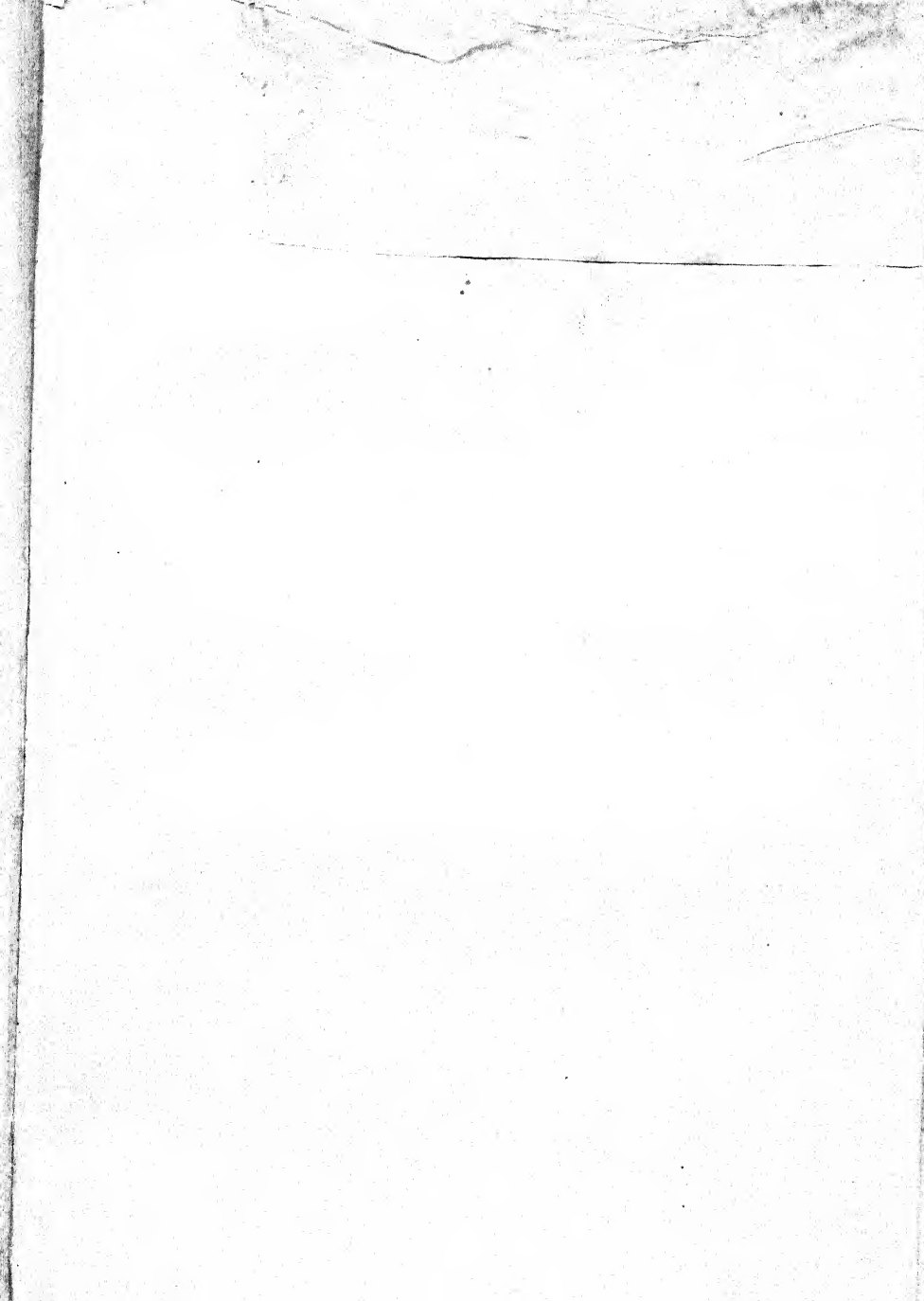
order was that the most frightful disorder ensued ; batteries were withdrawn out of action only to find that there was no room for them to cross ; cavalry and artillery were mixed up in the utmost confusion ; and, as the leading guns made their appearance on the opposite side of the valley, a perfect hail of shells and bullets was poured upon the densely packed mass of struggling men and horses.

Repulse  
of the  
German  
attack.

The French main position had in fact been scarcely affected hitherto by the progress of the Germans, and the defenders has been merely husbanding their strength in preparation for the expected attack. The murderous fire which now poured in from all sides on the gallant but rash attackers of the strong French position soon caused the assailants to melt away in all directions ; and, in spite of the most desperate gallantry, this ill-conceived advance met with the fate which it seemed to court ; and by 4.30 p.m. there was little left to tell of the German attack on the eastern slopes of the Mance valley, except the heaps of dead and dying which strewed the field. One battery alone had lost 37 men, and 75 horses.

After the repulse of the German attack, the French again confined themselves to awaiting in their strong positions the next move on the part of their assailants, while the Germans rapidly brought up reinforcements to the front. A pause in the hostilities now took place all along the line of attack of the First Army, which was coincident with the temporary cessation of offensive action on the part of the Second Army towards 5 p.m.

Towards 3 p.m. General Bourbaki, with the Grenadier Division of the Guard Corps, had moved off to the support of Marshal Canrobert (Sixth Corps) ; the latter had been specially cautioned to turn his attention to the *right wing*, and not commit himself lightly to an engagement. (See Map.)

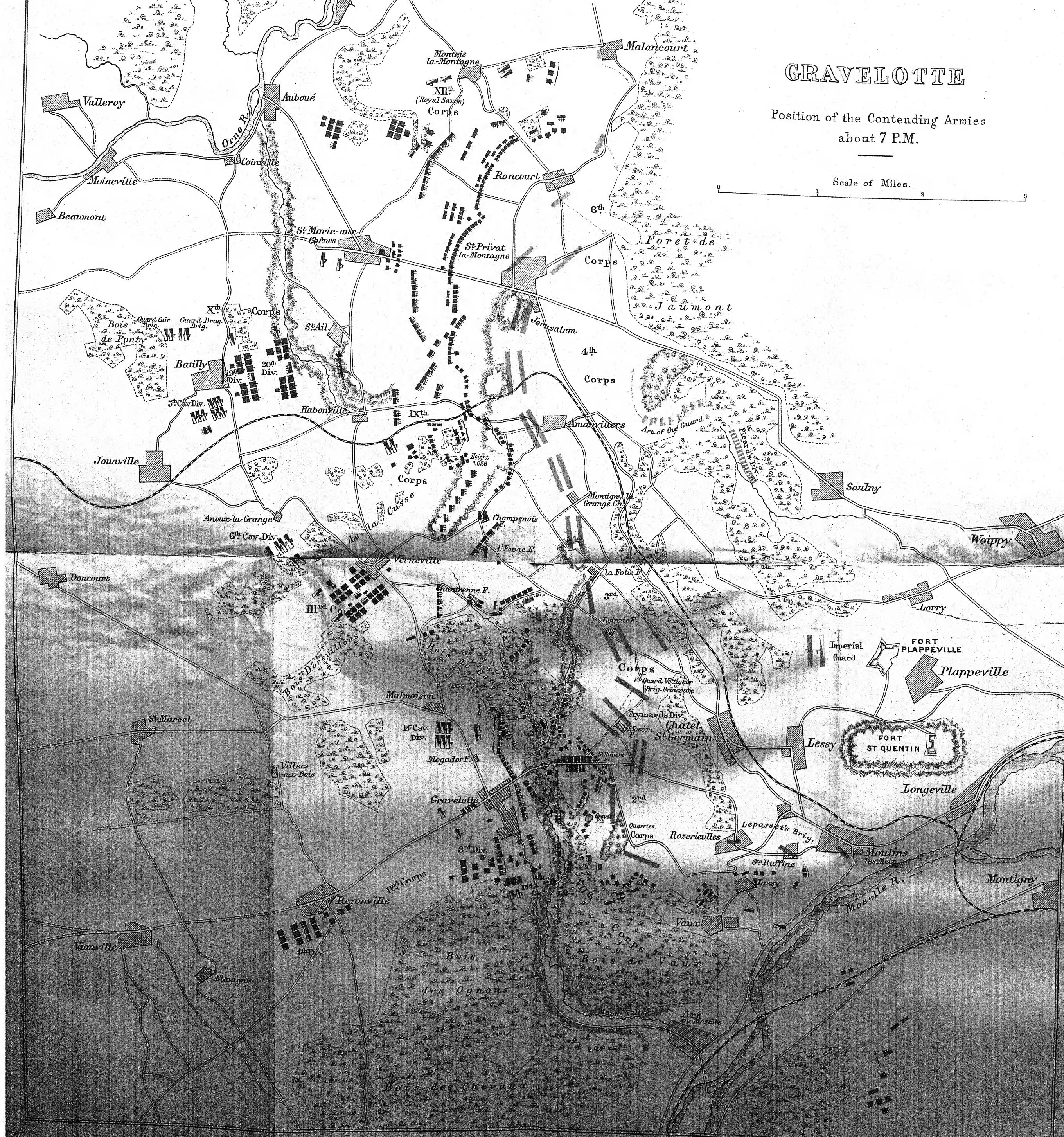




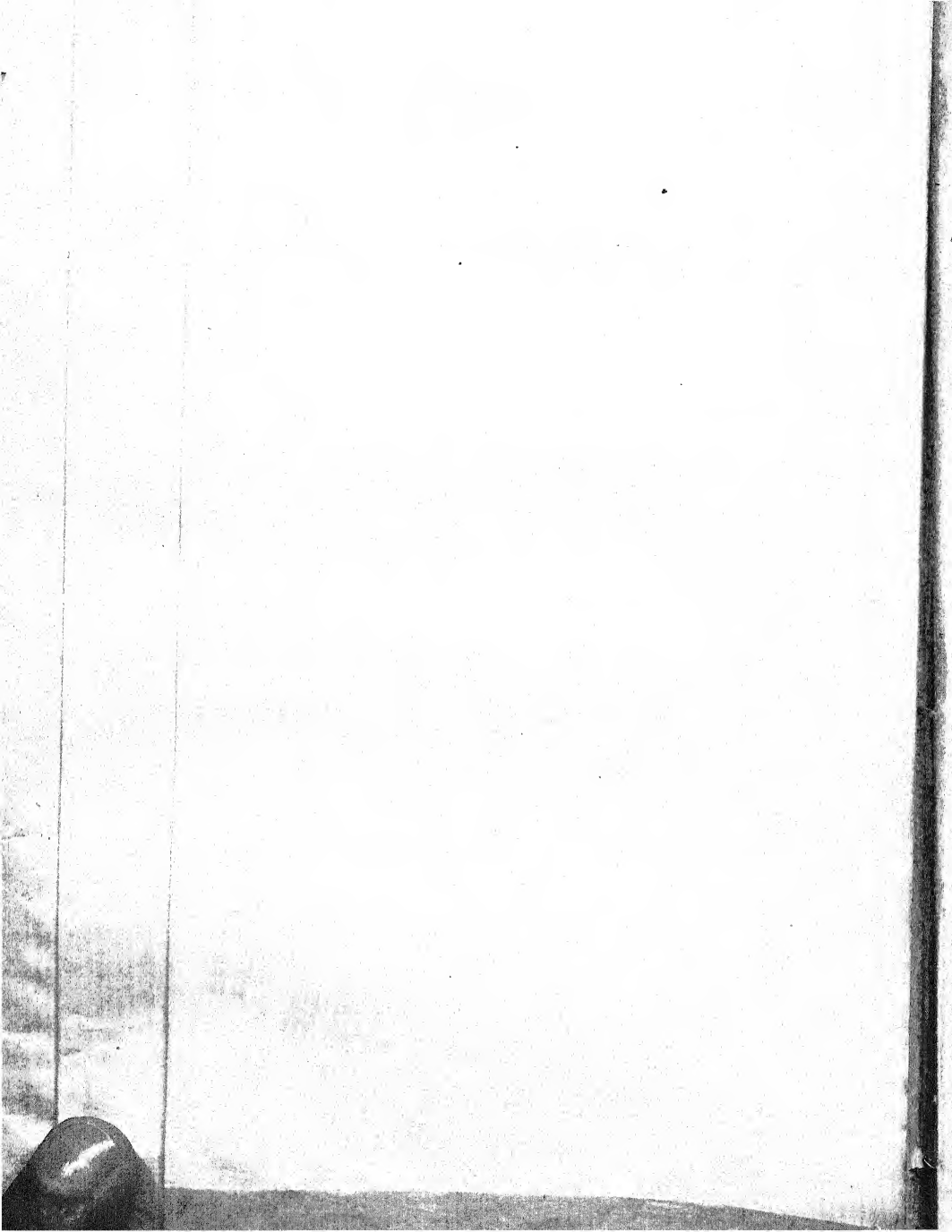
# GRAVELOTTE

Position of the Contending Armies  
about 7 P.M.

Scale of Miles.









*The Battle after 5 p.m.*

Between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. the troops of the Twenty-sixth Brigade, which had hitherto been guarding the German right flank at Ars, set off for Vaux in accordance with orders from army head-quarters. As soon as the foremost companies reached the ridge south of the village, they came under a vigorous fire from the batteries at Rozerieulles, and Mont St. Quentin; and the well-posted skirmishers in the opposite vineyards.

The village of Vaux itself was not occupied, and the assailants succeeded in pressing back the defenders south-west of Rozerieulles at all points. At the same time other detachments of the brigade were advancing to the attack of Jussy, which place fell into their hands after a short struggle. No further advance was made on this part of the field, the captured position appearing to fulfil the double object of facilitating the advance of Prussian troops from the Bois de Vaux, and of securing the rearward communications of the army against Metz.

The establishment of the Twenty-sixth Brigade in front of the extreme left wing of the French army had a special bearing upon the course of the battle, inasmuch as Marshal Bazaine allowed himself to be distracted, by increased apprehension for his left flank, from turning sufficient attention to other parts of the field, and more especially to the *right* flank.

*Engagements on the Point du Four Plateau.*

The severe fighting on the western slope of the Point du Jour plateau had, after 5 p.m., passed into a stationary infantry action. The original rôle of the First Army, viz. that of drawing the enemy's attention upon itself

and fighting a delaying action while the turning movement on the left of the Second Army was being carried out, had been not only fulfilled but exceeded, owing to the impetuosity of the troops, and to the fact that they had to a certain extent got out of hand in the wood fighting, added to which was the rash attempt of General von Steinmetz to throw a large force of cavalry and artillery across the ravine by the single causeway which connected the two banks, with a view to assuming an offensive, which was scarcely justified by circumstances or by the orders which he had received from army headquarters. There is, however, no doubt that the continued attacks on the part of the First Army contributed in no small degree to the detention of the main body of the French reserves in rear of their left wing, while the right wing was practically unsupported.

Arrival  
of the  
Second  
German  
Corps.

The Second Corps, which had assembled at Rezonville by 5.30 p.m., was placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief of the First Army, in consequence of the reports which reached the King towards 5 p.m. of the state of the action in the part of the field where the latter was engaged.

Accordingly, at 5.45 p.m. General von Fransecky moved off the corps artillery and the Third Division towards Gravelotte with the object of taking post to the south of that village; the Fourth Division followed at 6.30 p.m., in the same direction.

Resump-  
tion of the  
offensive  
by the  
German  
First  
Army.

On the approach of these reinforcements, General von Steinmetz at 6 p.m. ordered the advance of the Thirty-second Brigade from Gravelotte. These orders had already been anticipated, however, by General von Goeben. Reports having reached the King that the action in the northern part of the field was progressing favourably, and the roar of artillery in that part appearing to be on the increase, it seemed an opportune moment

to bring fresh pressure to bear on the enemy's left wing. General von Steinmetz was therefore ordered to push forward all his available forces towards Point du Jour.

Pursuant to these orders, the battalions of the Seventh Corps still remaining on the western side of the Mance valley were immediately led across to the attack; the Second Corps at the same time being instructed to join in the attack.

Whilst this fresh attack was preparing towards 7 p.m., the French were also bestirring themselves, and suddenly, without any warning, a dense cloud of smoke enveloped their lines, and in a moment the woods, the Gravelotte plateau, and even the spot where the King was standing, were overwhelmed with a hail of projectiles. Along the whole front of Frossard's (Second) Corps, and on the left wing of Leboeuf's (Third) Corps, all the French reserves were coming up into front line; the First Brigade of the Voltigeur Division of the Guard was brought up to the support of Aymard's Division. Towards St. Hubert, and especially towards the woods south of the highroad, strong bodies of skirmishers dashed forward, driving the isolated and mostly leaderless men and detachments before them over the open ground, and even into the Mance valley. In the midst of this sudden crisis, which made itself felt as far as Malmaison and Gravelotte, and even caused temporary confusion in the rear of the army, the troops of the foremost line maintained their positions with the greatest tenacity. The strongly occupied St. Hubert formed a firm *appui*, against which no serious attack was made, while the brisk fire of the infantry from the borders of the wood and the quarries shortly brought the further advance of the adversary to a close. Moreover, the counter-attacks of the freshly arriving Prussian battalions now commenced to become

Assumption of the offensive by the French left wing

effective, and the retreating detachments formed up under the cover thus afforded.

Nearest to the highroad, four battalions of the Thirty-second Brigade charged the advancing Frenchmen, and drove them back as far as the bend of the road ; their further advance, however, was checked by the cross fire of the French, which, interrupted for a short time by this sally, now broke out afresh. The offensive movement of the Seventh Corps was principally directed against the French positions south of Point du Jour. The attack from the west was joined in by the five battalions who, at an earlier period in the day, had established themselves in the northern edge of the Bois de Vaux. In the subsequent fighting at this point further losses were sustained by the Germans, and as darkness supervened the struggle was gradually broken off. A close line of outposts was formed, connecting the whole northern border of the wood, an offensive flank being formed by the advanced position of the Twenty-sixth Brigade in the neighbourhood of Jussy. In the event of hostilities being resumed the next day, the Seventh Corps had fourteen battalions in a position to co-operate in front of the Bois de Vaux, between Jussy and the great quarries. The arrival of the Second Corps was simultaneous with the engagements of the Seventh Corps just described.

General von Steinmetz at once led these fresh troops to the attack. On reaching the eastern slopes of the Mance valley, they encountered streams of stragglers hastening to the rear, and with some difficulty succeeded in pressing forward to the attack under the storm of bullets which now began to overwhelm them in the rapidly increasing darkness. Several attempts were made to gain possession of Moscou and Point du Jour, but the French defence was too powerful, and the

assailants fell back before the deadly fire of the enemy, leaving the ground in front of these places strewn with heaps of dead and dying.

Meanwhile, orders had been sent by the chief commanders to cease the engagement. It was resolved to hold the captured slopes in front of Moscou and Point du Jour during the night with the comparatively fresh troops of the Second Corps, and behind them to assemble the Eighth and parts of the Seventh Corps which had been employed in the same rayon.

*Advance of the Second Army.*

In front of the Second Army, as previously mentioned, a pause in the contest had taken place towards 5 p.m., during which a moderate fire was kept up by the German artillery while the movements for turning the French right flank were continued.

Between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., however, the whole scene suddenly changed. While the left wing of the Twelfth Corps, making a wide sweep to the northwards, was endeavouring to surround Roncourt, the bulk of the infantry of the Guard was advancing to the attack of the French positions at St. Privat, and thus giving the signal for a recommencement of the struggle by the Ninth Corps in the directions of Amanvillers and La Folie. On the front of the attack between Chantrenne and Roncourt a series of simultaneous actions thus developed, some independent, some concerted, but all with the common object of driving the enemy from his main positions.

At 5.30 p.m. the attack upon Amanvillers was commenced by the Third Guard Infantry Brigade (attached temporarily to the Ninth Corps). Advancing through the Bois de la Cusse, the sharp-shooters of the Guard, on

Renewal  
of the  
attack by  
the Ninth  
Corps.

reaching the eastern borders of the wood, advanced to the assault of the opposite heights under such a heavy fire, that in a short time *all* the officers of the battalion were *hors de combat*. Under these circumstances but little ground was gained. The other battalions of the Third Guard Infantry Brigade were meanwhile pressing forward to the support of the sharp-shooters, and by 6.30 p.m. had formed a continuous fighting line, spanning the crest of the ridge (1058) only eight hundred paces distant from the west side of Amanvillers, but flanked on both sides by hostile detachments. This advance had been executed at a heavy cost; nearly all the officers of another battalion being killed or wounded. The enemy was now within range of the needle-gun, and the action came to a temporary standstill towards 7 p.m., it being impossible for the present to make any further progress.

Almost simultaneously with these proceedings, the Prussian and Hessian troops, in the eastern parts of the Bois de la Cusse, endeavoured to participate in the attack on Amanvillers, but with the exception of bringing forward the left wing in a position to cover the artillery, very little advance was made against the deadly fire of the chasseur sweeping down the gentle slope in front of Amanvillers. The occupants of Champenois and L'Envie also pressed forward towards Amanvillers, thus preventing hostile detachments from annoying the German artillery.

Meanwhile the extreme right wing had been unable to make any progress in the neighbourhood of Chantrenne. The copse in front of La Folie, being strongly occupied by the enemy, resisted all the attacks of the Germans, and it was only by the aid of the artillery of the Third Corps, which opened fire upon the copse towards 7 p.m., that the exhausted infantry were rendered

secure in the positions which they had gained by hard fighting in front of Chantrenne.

The foremost line of the Ninth Corps, at 7 p.m. extended from the north-eastern corner of the Bois des Genivaux, about seven hundred paces to the eastward past Chantrenne, to L'Envie and Champenois, from which place it projected forward to within six hundred paces of Amanvillers; then again bent back a little to the rear towards the signalman's lodge at the railway, and at the lower southern slope of the St. Privat ridge joined almost immediately the positions at this time gained by the Guard Corps.

Situation  
of the  
Ninth  
Corps at  
7 p.m.

After the Guard Corps had taken up a firm position towards 5 p.m. at Ste. Marie and St. Ail, in the manner previously described, it was observed that French troops were in movement from Roncourt upon St. Privat, and that a long line of German guns had deployed on the further side of Ste. Marie, showing the impending completion of the Saxon outflanking movement.

Advance  
of the  
Guard  
Corps  
upon St.  
Privat.

Orders were now given for the advance of the Guard Corps against St. Privat, though the most northern column of the Saxons was not yet in sight, and the attack had not yet been prepared by the artillery. At 5.15 p.m. the Fourth Guard Infantry Brigade was directed to advance upon Jerusalem. At 5.45 p.m. the First Guard Brigade moved off from the south-west of Ste. Marie towards the south-west angle of St. Privat; the Second Guard Regiment followed at a distance of six hundred paces, while the rest of the Second Guard Brigade remained for the time being in and near Ste. Marie.

The Fourth Infantry Brigade of the Guard now deployed in two lines, with skirmishers in advance, along the road from St. Ail to Ste. Marie, under an overwhelming fire from the swarms of French skirmishers

Advance  
of the  
Fourth  
Guard  
Infantry  
Brigade.

which had covered the slopes and ridge in front. Advancing by rushes, under a perfect hail of bullets, the Guards succeeded, with enormous losses, in pressing back the enemy to Jerusalem. A counter-attack, by the troops of Cisse's Division, from the direction of Amanvillers, was checked by the fire of the two batteries of the Guard which unlimbered and came into action under a heavy fire on the ridge. The Fourth Guard Brigade continued to hold the hard-won positions on the ridge under heavy fire from St. Privat, but were unable to make any further advance for the present.

Advance  
of the  
First  
Guard  
Infantry  
Brigade.

At 5.45 p.m. the First Guard Brigade commenced its advance to the north of the highroad, upon the southwest angle of St. Privat. The ground here was equally open and unfavourable for attack; the open slopes affording absolutely no cover to the assailant, while the defenders' fire from Roncourt and St. Privat swept the entire surface with a storm of bullets. The French guns to the west and north of St. Privat had been silenced by the Saxon artillery; but on the south side of the village heavy batteries swept the front of attack in the most effective manner. The space between Roncourt and St. Privat was filled by French infantry, and the position, though not fortified like that of Point du Jour, might be considered practically unassailable. No sooner had the brigade commenced its deployment to the north of the highroad, than it came under the range of the chassepot. Advancing to six hundred paces north of the road, the brigade gradually wheeled to the right. Pushing forward rapidly, under the overwhelming fire of the enemy, the First Brigade succeeded in establishing itself, about 6.15 p.m., within six hundred to eight hundred paces west of the object of attack. This success was only achieved with such heavy losses, that the power of attack was for the present exhausted.



The Second Guard Regiment, which had been following in reserve, was now thrown into the gap which existed between the right flank of the First Brigade and the left flank of the Fourth Brigade.

The regiment advanced with its right across the highroad, under a heavy fire ; one battalion lost *all* its officers, and the whole regiment suffered severely. The state of affairs with the Guard Corps was now most critical. Unable to advance or to retire, under a heavy fire from the enemy, and momentarily expecting a counter-attack which it would tax their strength to the utmost to resist, the situation seemed to invite a powerful effort on the French side to crush their bold assailants ; strange to say, however, the opportunity was not taken advantage of. Every effort was now made to reinforce the exhausted troops in front of St. Privat ; the Fourth Guard Regiment was immediately despatched to the reinforcement of the First Brigade, and, at the same time, a powerful force of artillery was brought forward to assist in the attack. Towards 7 p.m., fourteen batteries of the guard were in action in two groups, one directing its fire upon St. Privat, the other upon Amanvillers. Jerusalem was soon set on fire, and flames were also observed to rise in several places above St. Privat.

The outflanking column of the Saxon Corps had reached the plateau in front of Montois at 6 p.m. ; the village was unoccupied, and the advance upon Roncourt combined with an extension of the left flank towards Malancourt. The Forty-fifth Brigade advancing at the same time against Roncourt from the west, joined hands with the troops of the First Guard Infantry Brigade, which had bent away to the northward. Shortly after 6.30 p.m., there were therefore fifteen battalions approaching Roncourt from west and north. During the advance, however, urgent messages for

Advance  
of the  
Second  
Guard  
Regiment.

Deployment  
of  
the Saxons  
against  
Roncourt.

assistance in the direction of St. Privat came from the hard-pressed Guard Corps, and in consequence a considerable portion of the assailants of Roncourt was diverted towards St. Privat.

Situation  
of the  
Second  
Army at  
7 p.m.  
Ninth  
Corps.

Towards seven o'clock, the situation of the Second Army was as follows:—

Guard  
Corps.

The Ninth Corps had made but little progress with its right wing beyond Chantrenne; the centre, however, was pushed forward close to Amanvillers, in immediate contact with the Guard Corps. The latter occupied the ridge south of St. Privat, and close up to the west side of this place the remains of four regiments were maintaining their positions; a fifth regiment had just come up on the left wing, and four more battalions were forming in reserve near Ste. Marie. From the west and north, two Saxon infantry brigades were advancing simultaneously upon St. Privat and Roncourt, while the other two were in readiness at the border of the Auboué cospes.

Saxon  
Corps.

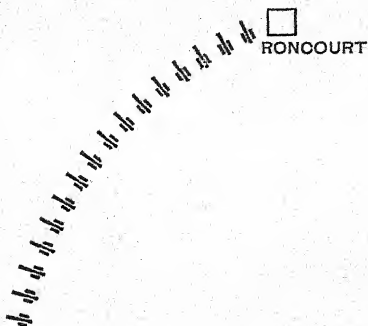
Capture of  
Roncourt.

Marshal Canrobert, recognizing the danger to which his right flank was exposed by the continual sweeping round of fresh troops to the attack, had sent several urgent messages for assistance. It was not, however, until 3 p.m. that the Grenadier Division of the Guard and the reserve artillery had moved off under General Bourbaki to the support of the threatened Sixth Corps. Under these circumstances, it had been impossible to assume the offensive against the shattered troops of the Prussian Guard Corps. Marshal Canrobert had also deemed it advisable to withdraw all the French troops from north of St. Privat, leaving only a rearguard at Roncourt to protect the movement.

The Saxon infantry consequently met with little

resistance at Roncourt. The troops which had been diverted from the attack upon Roncourt, continued their advance upon St. Privat. The ground north of St. Privat was as unfavourable for attack as that to the west, and in advancing up the bare hill-side, the ranks of the Saxons were thinned perceptibly by the volleys of the defenders. They succeeded, however, in gaining a walled position, from which the defenders were driven almost at the point of the bayonet, and forming up again under cover of this, they dashed forward to the next enclosure, only three hundred paces from the border of the village. The Fourth Guard Regiment had meanwhile established itself in a depression eight hundred paces from the north-west corner of St. Privat. The Forty-fifth Brigade had also reached the foremost fighting line on either side of the Roncourt road. Detachments were reforming everywhere in readiness to take part in the storming of St. Privat.

The Crown Prince of Saxony now ordered the batteries which were in the neighbourhood of the Auboué copses to form a new line facing south-east, and, shortly after, these fourteen batteries opened fire upon St. Privat from the positions indicated.



Storming  
of St.  
Privat.

About 7.30 p.m. the signal was given for the storming of St. Privat, and from north, west, and south, the Guard and Saxon Corps rushed forward to the assault. A hand to hand combat ensued which baffles all description, both sides seemed animated with the consciousness that the issue of the battle was to be determined at this point; and after half an hour of the most desperate fighting, accompanied with fearful losses on both sides, St. Privat, the key of the position on the French right, fell into the hands of the assailants.

Close of  
the battle.

With the capture of St. Privat, the defeat of the French right wing was decided. The beaten troops of the French Sixth Corps hastened towards the Moselle, and only a few detachments succeeded by their firm bearing in preventing the retreat from becoming a rout. The Grenadier Division of the Guard, which had arrived too late to prevent defeat, now appeared at the north-west of the Bois de Saulny, while the reserve artillery deployed on a broad front near the Amanvillers stone quarries, and directed a brisk fire on the German batteries.

Simultaneously with the storming of St. Privat, the troops of the Ninth and Tenth Corps had succeeded in driving the enemy from Amanvillers, after that village had been set on fire by the artillery.

During the night the French gradually withdrew their troops towards Metz.

The German Army had thus, after eight hours' severe fighting, carried a position extending from Jussy along the edge of the Bois de Vaux, past St. Hubert, through Bois des Genivaux to the eastward beyond Chantrenne and Champenois, thence across the heights of Amanvillers and St. Privat to Malancourt. The advanced troops were, in general, close in front of this line. The forces which had sustained the brunt of the fighting

were nearly exhausted by their efforts and the losses they had suffered. At the decisive points, however, there were still sufficient reserves to maintain the hard-won positions against any fresh offensive movement on the part of the enemy.

The French right wing had been completely defeated; the left wing, however, had maintained its positions.

At 8.30 p.m. the following order was issued by the Commander-in-Chief of the Second Army:—

“The Army will bivouac in the positions which it may occupy at the end of the action, and throw out infantry outposts, which are to connect themselves with the neighbouring corps, and be on their guard lest the enemy make a desperate attempt to cut his way through in the night. To-morrow morning at 5 a.m. the chiefs of the general staff of all the corps will assemble at Caulre farm for the purpose of reporting the positions of their corps and receiving further orders. The headquarters proceed for the night to Doncourt.”

In accordance with this and the independent arrangement already made, the various parts of the Second Army found themselves at the conclusion of the struggle in the following positions:—

*Twelfth Corps* between St. Privat, Roncourt, and Montois.

*Guard Corps* (less Third Brigade) between St. Privat and Ste. Marie, with detachments at Roncourt and St. Ail.

*Artillery of the Guard* at St. Ail, with First Field Division at St. Privat.

*Guard Cavalry Division* at Batilly.

Tenth Corps { Twentieth Division at St. Privat.  
Nineteenth        „        St. Ail.

Ninth Corps { Hessian Division and Third Guard Infantry  
Brigade, east of Bois de la Cusse.  
Eighteenth Division at Verneville and Chantrenne.

Third Corps west of Bois des Genivaux.

Fifth Cavalry Division between St. Ail and Ste. Marie.

Sixth        „        „        west of Verneville.

Bivouacs  
of the  
First  
Army.

With regard to the First Army:—

Seventh Corps, eastern border of Bois de Vaux, and collected at Gravelotte.

Eighth Corps, west and north-west of Gravelotte.

Second Corps on Point du Jour plateau, in contact with the enemy.

Losses { French, 13,000.  
Germans, 20,000, of which the Guard Corps alone lost over 8000.

### Summary.

The battle of Gravelotte brought to a conclusion the operations which, dating from the battle of Colombey, had led by successive steps to the retirement of the French Army under the protection of the guns of the fortress of Metz.

In the three days' struggle (14th, 16th, 18th) round Metz, it was reserved for the third day to reap the fruits of the two preceding, in a decisive battle, *pre-meditated and planned beforehand*; and the crowning success was only achieved by the most extraordinary efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of the German commanders and their men.

As the reports came in to the German head-quarters during the night of the 18th and the morning of the 19th, it became clear that the French Army, after the defeat of the right wing, had been withdrawn from its strong position and retired upon Metz. The task, therefore, now before the German Army, was to prevent any attempt on the part of the French Army to break through the German lines in order to resume active operations in the field. The rôle of the German Army would, therefore, be for the most part *defensive*, until some new phase in the campaign should bring about a different condition of affairs.

Thus ended the offensive campaign round Metz,

greatest  
victory  
seen.

and from the same date commenced the investment of that important stronghold. At this new point of departure in the operations, the King of Prussia, thinking that a smaller force would be sufficient for the actual investment than had been required for the previous extensive field operations, resolved to set free as large a number of troops as could be spared, to co-operate with the Third Army in the campaign against MacMahon. (See Diary of the War.)

*Comments.*

The most striking feature of the French defence at Gravelotte which calls for adverse criticism was the massing of large *general* reserve in rear of the left flank. This part of the position was both by nature and art as strong as any commander could desire, and as an evidence of its strength is the fact that, in spite of the rash and determined attacks made on it by the troops of the First Army, they could not succeed in shaking the French defence at any point, and were only enabled by dint of the most reckless sacrifice of human life to achieve the capture of the French advanced posts. Bazaine, however, appears to have been either unable or unwilling to recognize this fact, and was still haunted by the same dread of being cut off from Metz as had at the battle of Mars-la-Tour led him to commit precisely the same error. There can be no doubt that if a sufficient reserve had been available on the French right wing to enable the troops at that point to assume the offensive, after the first attack of the Prussian Guard upon the St. Privat position, that the Saxons would never have been able to complete their extensive flanking movement, and that, instead of the French *right*

Disposi-  
tion of  
French  
reserve.

wing having been defeated, it would, in all probability, have been the German *left* wing which would have suffered that fate. At all events, there can be no question that the French would have been able to stand their ground, and, with the fortress at their back to supply the army with ammunition and food, would have been in a much better situation to resume the contest on the following day than the German troops, already considerably weakened by the fighting of the 18th.

Relations  
of offen-  
sive and  
defensive.

We observe that in this battle the French, holding a very strong defensive position, were attacked by a German force of not quite double their strength, and found themselves, generally speaking, quite able to hold their own, the position being successfully turned only owing to the faulty disposition of the principal French reserves. In attacking this position and executing the turning movement of the French right flank, the assailants lost half as many men again as the defenders. It would therefore appear that it is a hazardous business to attack an enemy in a *previously selected and prepared position*, unless the attack is twice as strong numerically as the defence.

Use of  
artificial  
defences.

The battle of Gravelotte brings forward, more prominently than any other in the war, the enormous advantages which accrue from the judicious strengthening of a natural position by aid of the resources of the field engineer. We note that the *chain of fortified posts* connected by shelter trenches, etc., was not broken through at any one point, and that it was only with the most enormous losses that the Germans succeeded in obtaining possession of the *unconnected advanced posts*, such as St. Hubert and Ste. Marie aux Chênes and Chantrenne. It is also to be observed that between St. Privat and the Forêt de Jaumont, the position had been in no way artificially strengthened, and that it



was *at this point only* that the French line was driven in.

At Gravelotte, as at Mars-la-Tour, the superiority of the French chassepot over the German rifle at long ranges made itself felt. This was specially the case in the attack of the Guards at St. Privat, on which occasion the formation of the Guards in the preliminary stages of the charge, *before* they were able to use their own weapons with effect, was simply melted away by the galling long-range fire of the French, the masses in rear of the skirmishing line being driven to deploy to the *left* of the line of attack, instead of maintaining their proper position in support of the line of skirmishers.

Long-range  
infantry  
fire.

## BATTLE OF SEDAN, SEPTEMBER 1.

Introduc-  
tion.

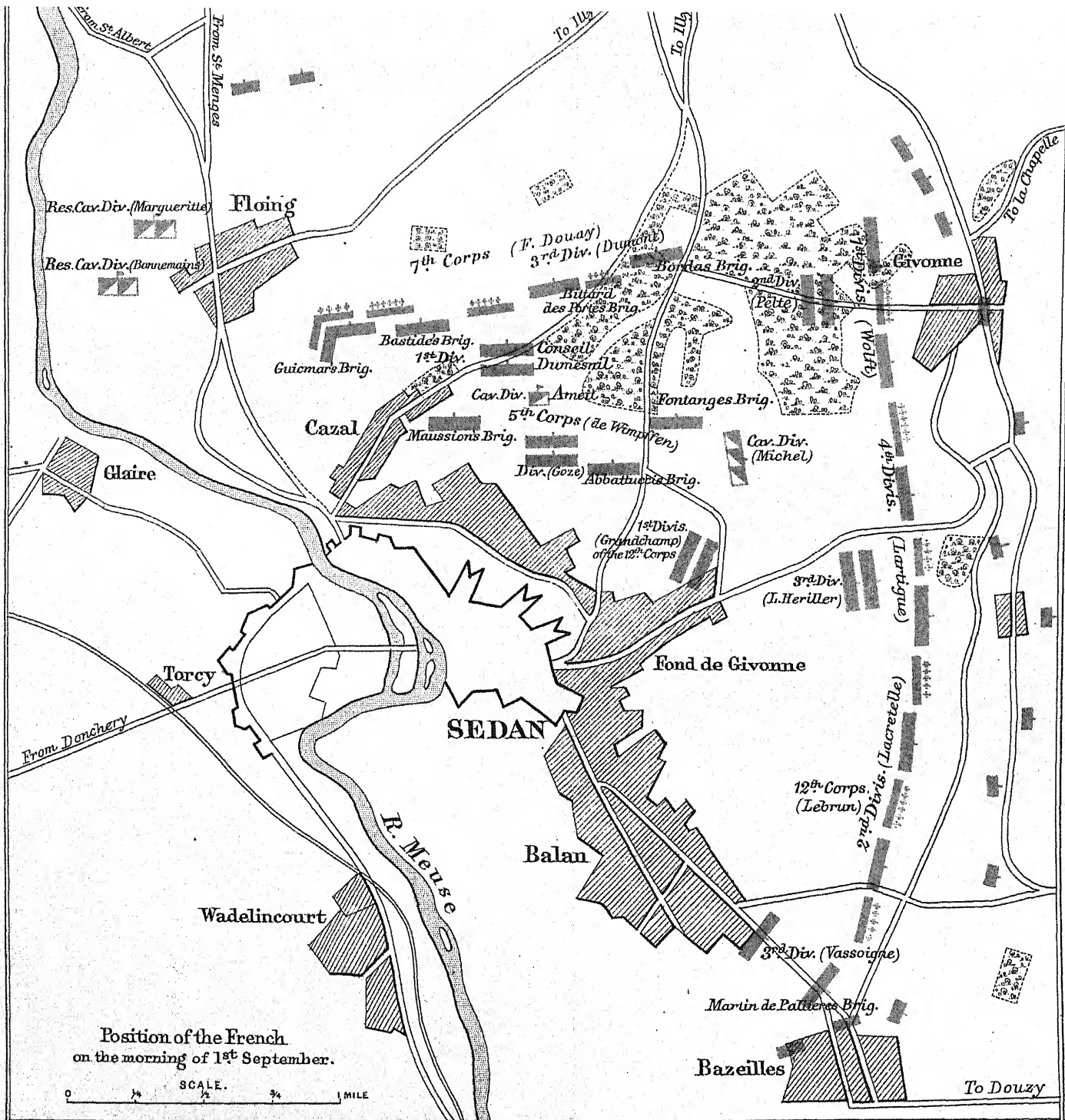
FROM the purport of the reports received at royal head-quarters on the 31st of August, it was certain that MacMahon had abandoned the left bank of the Meuse, and concentrated his forces in the immediate neighbourhood of Sedan. It was supposed that the French commander would not accept battle at Sedan, but would rather endeavour to escape the impending envelopment, either by rapidly continuing his retreat westwards to Mézières, or by suddenly breaking out towards Carignan, or, if reduced to extremities, by escaping over the Belgian frontier.

The order already promulgated at Busancy on the evening of the 30th of August contained general views as to the future proceedings of the German Army ; while  
See Map I. with reference to the movements of the Third Army in particular, all that was necessary had been decided upon in a conference at Chémery. From further information received at head-quarters, it appeared that MacMahon intended to escape to Mézières. The following orders were consequently issued :—

*Orders for the Third Army.*

Orders for  
the 1st  
September  
issued at

" 1. The Eleventh Corps will start before daybreak, and proceed through Donchery to Vrigne aux Bois, where it will take up such a position on the brook in front, that



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Edw. Waller. lith.

the movement of the enemy towards Mézières, between the Meuse and the Belgian frontier, will be impossible.

Chémery,  
August 31,  
9 p.m.

"2. The Fifth Corps will quit its bivouacs at 5 a.m., follow the Eleventh Corps through Donchery, and take up such an alignment with it, that the right wing is thrown forward across the Vrine. The artillery will be so placed as to sweep the road from Vrine to Sedan.

"3. The Wurtemberg Division will throw a bridge this night at Dom-le-Mesnil, cross it at daybreak, and take up such a position on the Sedan-Mézières road, that it can show front towards Mézières, and at the same time serve as a reserve to the Eleventh Corps. The bridge will continue to be occupied.

"4. The Second Bavarian Corps will start at 5 a.m. with one division, proceed through Bulson to Frénois, and occupy the heights opposite Donchery, on the left bank of the Meuse, with the reserve artillery; the latter will head the column. The other division will move through Noyers, and take up a position facing Sedan, between Frénois and Wadelincourt, in order to prevent any debouch from the fortress.

"5. The First Bavarian Corps will remain at Remilly, unless the advance of the Crown Prince of Saxony should necessitate the corps taking part in the engagement.

"6. The Sixth Cavalry Division will break up from Mazerny at 5 a.m., and proceed through Boutaucourt and Boulzicourt, to Flize on the Meuse, where it will take post until further orders.

"7. The Fourth Cavalry Division will concentrate south of Frénois, and there await instructions.

"8. The Second Cavalry Division will quit its cantonments at 6 a.m., and move to Boutaucourt, taking up a position to the south of that village.

"9. The Fifth Cavalry Division and the Sixth Army Corps will remain in their cantonments.

"Reports for the Commander-in-Chief are to be sent to Frénois. The trains will not move for the present. Head-quarters remain at Chémery."

*Dispositions of Fourth Army for the 1st of September.*

Orders for  
Fourth  
Army,  
issued at  
Mouzon,  
Sept. 1,  
1.45 a.m.

"1. The Guard Corps will fall in *at once*, and advance with one division through Escombres, Pouru aux Bois, to Villers Cernay, with the other division through Sachy, Pouru St. Rémy, to Francheval; the Corps Artillery is attached to this division.

"2. The Twelfth Corps will likewise fall in at once and concentrate on the highroad south of Douzy, with the object of making a forward movement from thence towards La Moncelle, by way of Lamécourt.

"3. The offensive movement must commence at 5 a.m., at any rate with the advanced guards, from Pouru aux Bois, Pouru St. Rémy, and Douzy. The main bodies will follow as speedily and as closely as possible. The three columns of attack will preserve communication with one another.

"4. The Fourth Army Corps will advance with one Division and the Corps Artillery to Remilly sur Meuse, in order to give any support which may be necessary to the First Bavarian Corps, which will advance upon Bazeilles. The other division will pass the Meuse at Mouzon, and advance along the right bank of that river as far as Mairy, and serve as the general reserve. The corps will move with all possible speed.

"5. All the trains and baggage will remain stationary, and the knapsacks will be left behind.

"6. Reports will be sent to the height east of Amblimont."

In accordance with the instructions of the two Commanders-in-Chief, the German forces moved off partly



in the night, and partly at daybreak, on the 1st of September.

Meanwhile, contrary to the suppositions of the Germans, the French army was still in the space between Sketch 15. the Givonne, the Meuse, and the Floing brook; a position well calculated to offer a stubborn resistance.

### *Description of the Field.*

Towards the south and west the French position was Southern and western boundary. protected by the Meuse, whose broad valley, mostly within range of the guns of the fortress, is enclosed at many points between high banks, while, by damming the Map 6. river, it was completely laid under water along the whole extent between Sedan and the west side of Bazeilles.

The eastern boundary was marked by the depression Eastern boundary. of the Givonne brook, from the western edge of which an effective fire could be brought to bear upon almost every point of the opposite field of approach. Continuous ranges of hills, separated by broad depressions, formed several parallel ramparts of defence towards the north-west, yet from the very commencement the French had North-west boundary. limited themselves to the southernmost of these ranges, which projects from the Bois de la Garenne towards Floing and Illy, the valley running up towards the Bois de la Garenne from between Floing and Cazal offering an excellent position for the concealment of reserves. In addition to this there were many smaller ravines and depressions, which, in conjunction with the Bois de la Garenne and smaller copses, afforded plenty of cover.

In order to approach the position from Donchery without coming under fire from the guns of the fortress, a detour must be made to the north of the great bend of the Meuse. This road, from Vrigne aux Bois or Montimont to St. Menges is so narrowly confined between the

bend of the river and the steep scarped heights to the north, that it would be very easy to check an enemy advancing by it. The difficulty of this route is still further enhanced by the fact that a brook running down from the Bois de la Falizette to the Meuse, in a deep and narrow ravine, can only be crossed at this point. The country lying further to the north, between the Meuse and the Belgian frontier, is very intersected, covered with wood, and therefore scarcely practicable for large bodies of troops.

Position  
of the  
French  
Army.

In the triangle between the Meuse, Givonne, and Floing brook, the French Army was awaiting the German attack in the positions indicated in the map. (Sketch 15.)

Early in the morning of the 1st of September, a detachment from Margueritte's Cavalry Division, thrown out to the eastward, reported that German troops had passed through Pouru aux Bois at midnight, but up till 3 a.m. had not proceeded beyond Francheval. At the same time a telegram from General Lebrun reported that the French Twelfth Corps had just been attacked by the Bavarians.

MacMahon at once rode forward to Bazeilles, and found Vassoigne's Division seriously engaged.

### *Commencement of the Battle.*

Opening  
of the  
action by  
the First  
Bavarian  
Corps at  
Bazeilles,  
4.15  
to 9 a.m.

Agreeably with the instructions received during the night from the Crown Prince of Prussia to hold fast the enemy and co-operate with the army of the Meuse (Fourth Army under the Crown Prince of Saxony), General von der Tann, commanding the First Bavarian Corps, resolved to push forward across the Meuse those parts of the First Division which were in front line, and prevent, at all hazards, the withdrawal of the French Army.



Accordingly, at 3 a.m., the First Infantry Brigade was ordered to cross by the pontoon bridge at Aillicourt. The foremost detachments of the Second Infantry Brigade were to make a simultaneous advance across the railway bridge, with the object of gaining Bazeilles as quietly and quickly as possible from both points, and, if practicable, to advance without firing as far as the northern border of the village. At 4 a.m., covered by a dense mist, the Bavarians began to cross the two bridges.

The extensive village of Bazeilles, surrounded with gardens and park enclosures, consists principally of strongly built houses, and contains many large buildings susceptible of an obstinate and protracted defence. The roads from Balan and Douzy meet at an obtuse angle in the middle of the village, dividing the north-eastern portion from the remainder. In the south-west portion, about one hundred and eighty yards west of the point of junction, there is an extensive market-place, with a large stone church, and at the extreme south-east border lies the Château Dorival, with its adjacent park. From Villa Beurmann, situated in the northern part of the village, between the main road and that to Daigny, the former can be enfiladed in its entire length. The park of Monvillers, which projects to the north-east, consists of plantations and meadows, and in the northern part of detached orchards. On the north-west it was surrounded by a strong hedge, with a ditch in front; at other places by a high wall. This latter part had but one opening on its long eastern side, which formed the entrance to the château. The Givonne, which flows through the park, could only be crossed in the interior by two bridges; north of the park the brook was fordable. The space between Monvillers and the most southern portion of La Moncelle is tolerably open, and generally practicable for the movement of troops.

*Description of Bazeilles and Monvillers.*

*The park of Monvillers.*

The village of Bazeilles had been occupied since the evening of the 31st by a French Brigade (Des Pallières), and its northern portion arranged for an energetic defence, for which purpose Villa Beurmann and other strong buildings on the north side served more especially as support.

Fighting at  
Bazeilles.

The foremost battalions of the Bavarians reached the northern edge of the village at 5 a.m., and made the most desperate attacks on the Villa Beurmann at the same time that the remainder of the Bavarians were forcing their way inch by inch into the interior of the village from the north and east. A street fight of the most sanguinary description now ensued. All attacks upon the Villa Beurmann proved futile in the face of the determined resistance and repeated sallies of the French ; but after severe fighting and heavy losses, the Bavarians succeeded in occupying the two stone-built corner houses of the main street where the Douzy road joins it, and in arranging them for defence: the French still held both sides of the street as far as the corner, which now became the focus of the fight. Repeated attacks of the French upon the two corner houses, were repulsed with great slaughter, while the French in their turn repulsed the Bavarian attacks upon a large building opposite, with equal success ; and it was not until two guns of the Second Brigade (advancing from Remilly) were brought up to within sixty yards of this latter building, and opened fire upon it, that it was abandoned by the French and occupied by the Bavarians.

The same two guns were now unlimbered and brought up through an unoccupied side street into the main street, in order to assist in the renewed attack on Villa Beurmann. The detachment succeeded in firing twelve rounds, but by that time all the gunners being killed or disabled, the guns had to be withdrawn out of action by the infantry.

As both sides continued to bring up fresh troops, the engagement continued with unabated vigour, but without any decisive success on either side. As soon as the advance of the Saxons upon La Moncelle had been reported, a Bavarian battery, which had reached Bazeilles from Remilly, was despatched to join the Saxon battery already in action on the heights east of La Moncelle. Advance  
of the  
Saxons  
upon La  
Moncelle.

6.45 a.m.

The park of Monvillers, which lay between the Bavarians and the Saxons advancing upon La Moncelle, was still held by the enemy. In order to deprive the latter of this important point of support, and to fill the gap still existing in the German line of battle, General von der Tann now made use of the foremost troops of his Second Division, which, after crossing the pontoon bridge at 7 a.m., had reached the Bazeilles railway station. The action at this point speedily became so brisk that fresh troops had to be brought up into the fighting line; but no great progress could be made beyond the park against the strong and well-screened bodies of tirailleurs.

The first three brigades of the First Bavarian Corps were now engaged in the fierce, but indecisive struggle, raging in Bazeilles and Monvillers Park; the various units were inextricably mixed up, even the Third Brigade, which was the last to come into action, having by this time but few unbroken companies. 9 a.m.

Meanwhile, the Fourth Brigade was also approaching the scene of action, marching up from Remilly, which place it quitted on the arrival of the Eighth Division (Fourth Corps).

The artillery reserve, which had maintained a desultory and, up to this time, fruitless fire from the heights on the left bank of the Meuse, was brought forward about 9 a.m. across the pontoon bridges.

Such was the general state of the action with the First Bavarian Corps towards 9 a.m. General von der Tann had taken up his position on the Douzy road at the eastern issue of Bazeilles, and upon receiving notification of the arrival of the Saxons (Twelfth Corps) at La Moncelle, he had summoned the Eighth Prussian Division at Remilly likewise to cross the Meuse, in order to serve as support to the troops engaged on the Givonne.

While the First Bavarian Corps was attacking Bazeilles, the Twelfth (Saxon Corps) had been also engaged for some time on its right.

Advance  
of the  
Twelfth  
Corps  
to La  
Moncelle.

At 3.30 a.m. the Twelfth Corps had been ordered to assemble at Douzy, and the Twenty-fourth Division to push forward a brigade at 5 a.m. to La Moncelle. The engagement at this point was commenced about 6 a.m. by the light battery of the advanced guard taking up a position five hundred and fifty yards to the north-east of La Moncelle, and opening fire upon the far superior force of French artillery on the opposite heights. This battery was joined about an hour later by two Bavarian batteries. Upon the arrival of the infantry of the advanced guard, a dash was made upon the village, which was taken without much difficulty from the apparently surprised enemy. The French retired to a nursery garden about forty yards in rear of the western limits of the village; while still further in rear, other detachments were seen hastening towards two detached houses on the slope close to the Balan road. On the height itself appeared a strong line of infantry, which was being reinforced, apparently from the direction of Bazeilles.

At this juncture the advanced detachments dashed across the bridge at La Moncelle at a rapid pace, repulsed the French skirmishers, and occupied the

nearer of the two houses. The second house was shortly after captured, under a heavy fire by other companies of the same regiment, and hastily prepared for defence. These two houses henceforth became the focus of the struggle on this part of the field, but no efforts on the part of the French could dislodge the gallant little force of Saxons from their far-advanced post. These troops of the advanced guard, in the two houses and at La Moncelle, to the number of ten companies, could not for the present obtain any support from the rear, as, almost coincidently with the collision at La Moncelle, an offensive movement had been made by the French First Corps at Daigny, in consequence of which it became necessary to employ the available troops of the advanced guard, and later on the main body of the Twenty-fourth Division against the enemy's force now moving forward to the attack. Meanwhile, the advanced guard had connected itself with the Bavarian attack on the park at Monvillers.

The main body of the Twelfth Corps was still advancing towards Douzy.

While the advanced guard of the Twenty-fourth Division was thus partly engaged, in conjunction with the Bavarians, in the Givonne valley, and partly in the direction of Daigny, twelve German batteries gradually deployed on the heights east of La Moncelle, on either side of the Lamécourt road. The three batteries of the Twenty-fourth Division on the right flank were at once enfiladed by infantry and mitrailleuse fire, in consequence of which they wheeled to the right and joined in the attack on Daigny. These batteries were shortly afterwards reinforced, and by 8.30 a.m. there were ten Saxon and two Bavarian batteries in action against Daigny and the opposite heights, upon which the Twelfth French Corps had likewise deployed a

Establish-  
ment of  
German  
artillery.

numerous artillery, in addition to the strong force of infantry, which had already caused numerous casualties among the German gunners, by their close fire.

About 9 a.m. hostile bodies of infantry were observed advancing towards Bazeilles and La Moncelle.

On the French side there had already been two changes in the chief command. Marshal MacMahon, after observing that matters were progressing satisfactorily in the direction of Bazeilles, had proceeded to the heights west of La Moncelle, and shortly after his arrival was wounded by the splinter of a shell; this occurred towards 6 a.m. The chief command was handed over to Ducrot, Generals Wimpffen and Douay both being passed over, though senior to Ducrot in rank. When this news reached General Ducrot, he immediately, in accordance with his conception of the situation, ordered a retreat to Mézières. As reports continued to come in to the effect that bodies of Germans were moving forward through Villers Cernay in the direction of Illy, there was only the fear lest the French *left* wing might be turned from the northward. General Ducrot therefore desired, in the first instance, to assemble the army on the Illy plateau, and take up a position with his right flank resting on Sedan and the Meuse, the left on the Givonne valley and the thickly wooded frontier district.

With the object of carrying out the general's idea, Vassoigne's Division at Bazeilles prepared to withdraw gradually out of action; while the division of Lacretelle on its left made an attack upon La Moncelle to facilitate the operation. In this attack the troops of Vassoigne's Division which had not yet been engaged, participated.

Soon after 7 a.m. General Wimpffen, becoming aware of the movement contemplated by Ducrot, and conceiving that it was utterly opposed to the interests of

French  
attack  
upon the  
Bavarian  
and Saxon  
positions  
at Bazeilles  
and La  
Moncelle,  
9 a.m. to  
10.30 a.m.

7 a.m.

Map 1.

Assump-  
tion of  
the chief  
command

the French Army, produced a letter from the War Minister appointing him to the chief command, in the event of any casualty befalling MacMahon. General Ducrot immediately resigned in his favour.

General Wimpffen knowing that a retreat to Mézières was impracticable, owing to the presence of the German troops at and near Donchery, and believing also that he could hold the present position and even open the road to Carignan, gave orders for the rearward movement to be stopped immediately; whilst some troops of Vassoigne's Division, which had been withdrawn from Bazeilles, were ordered to advance upon that place again forthwith. (See p.140.)

Thus at 9 a.m. a general forward movement was taking place against the First Bavarian Corps and the Saxon troops which had meanwhile deployed to the right of it.

The French infantry was now preparing to cross the valley at several points, and although the advancing columns were brought to a standstill by a vigorous fire, yet the Saxon Corps Artillery, in position at a distance of only three hundred paces from the valley, was so harassed by the French tirailleurs that it had to be temporarily withdrawn out of action.

Under these circumstances the weak detachments of German infantry at La Moncelle suffered severely, and the reinforcements which were intended for that place had, as we have seen, been diverted to resist the French offensive movement from Dagny.

About this time (9 a.m.) reinforcements began to arrive from the Twenty-third Saxon Division, and the line of German guns was shortly reinforced by four batteries; making, shortly after 9 a.m., a total of thirteen Saxon and three Bavarian batteries in action on the heights east of the Givonne.

Bazeilles,  
10 a.m.

The reinforcements at Monvillers and La Moncelle proving sufficient to ward off the threatened attack of the French, the Fourth Bavarian Brigade was enabled to send assistance to the troops engaged at Bazeilles, already running short of ammunition and hard pressed by the renewed attack of Vassoigne's Division just alluded to. Towards 10 a.m. the Bavarian troops were successful in regaining their lost ground in the village, and were slowly pressing back the French.

Arrival  
of the  
German  
Fourth  
Corps.

Meanwhile the head of the Fourth German Corps had reached the battle-field; the Eighth Division arriving at the Bazeilles railway station in support of the First Bavarian Corps shortly after 10 a.m.; the Seventh Division at Lamécourt at 10 a.m.; and the Corps Artillery in readiness to advance from the neighbourhood of Aillicourt.

Such was the general state of the engagement on the German left wing from 10 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. We must now turn to the right wing of the Twelfth Saxon Corps opposite Daigny.

Engage-  
ments on  
the right  
wing of the  
Twelfth  
Corps.

General Ducrot, believing that the Daigny bridge was the only practicable crossing for artillery in the Givonne valley, and considering it necessary to occupy the left bank for the purpose of efficiently maintaining it, had ordered Lartigue's Division to advance\* shortly after 6 a.m. in the direction of the Bois Chevalier. This Division was intended to fight to the very last in order to hold the bridge.

To oppose this movement the Saxons had deployed along the road leading past the west of the Bois Chevalier towards Villers Cernay. A vigorous musketry action shortly became general along the whole line. The French brought up artillery and mitrailleuses on their

\* This was the offensive movement of the French previously alluded to.



right, and on the other side made repeated attacks on the almost entirely exposed right flank of the Saxons. The Saxon batteries were also severely dealt with by the French tirailleurs at a range of less than five hundred yards.

Matters were becoming serious for the Saxons, and it was only with the greatest difficulty and the unwavering devotion of the men that they managed to hold their own; ammunition was running short and some battalions had already expended their last rounds, when reinforcements began to arrive upon both flanks, and the advanced guard of the Guard Corps appeared from the direction of Villers Cernay.

A determined attack was now made from both flanks and centre upon the enemy in front of Daigny, and the French were driven back at the point of the bayonet into the village. The victorious Saxons pressed forward into the village, and after some hard fighting the bridge and mill were both captured and occupied. Capture of the bridge and mill at Daigny.

After a most gallant and determined resistance on the part of the French, the Saxon troops, aided by some Bavarian detachments which had advanced along the Givonne valley road through the farms, succeeded in driving the enemy out of his last stronghold (the factory buildings), and towards 10 a.m. Lartigue's Division was completely thrown back to the western bank of the Givonne, with a loss of six guns, and heavy casualties in killed and wounded. Capture of Daigny

A stationary action was still maintained by the opposing forces on either side of the Givonne brook, in the neighbourhood of Daigny; the offensive action of the Guard Corps on the Saxon right protecting that flank from any repetition of the attacks which had previously been made on it.\*

\* See subsequent narrative.

Assault of  
the La  
Moncelle  
heights  
by the  
Bavarians  
and  
Saxons,  
and com-  
plete occu-  
pation of  
Bazeilles.

The reinforcements which arrived about 10 a.m. enabled the Saxons and Bavarians at La Moncelle and Bazeilles to assume the offensive vigorously all along the line.

The condition of the gallant defenders of the two detached houses on the La Moncelle-Balan road, who had held out for three hours against the most determined attacks of the French, and expended nearly all their ammunition, rendered this offensive movement highly necessary.

A simultaneous advance of the Saxons and Bavarians from La Moncelle and Monvillers, which was joined in by the Eighth Prussian Division from the railway station, took place about 10.30 a.m. After a vigorous resistance on the part of the French the height (635) was captured, and in a short time the whole German line succeeded in establishing itself on the foremost ridge, the Saxon troops extending in a broad front across the ridge to beyond the roads leading from La Moncelle and Bazeilles to Balan.

11 a.m.

Simultaneously with this victorious assault of the heights west of La Moncelle, the Bavarians had taken complete possession of Bazeilles.

The troops engaged in the south-eastern part of the village had succeeded some time previously in passing to the northward of the bend in the road; the rifle detachments ensconced in the summer-house had also gained a firm footing in the main street. A general advance was then made up the main street, and also from the park of Monvillers. The Villa Beurmann was almost surrounded, and the French beat a hasty retreat from the stronghold which up to this time had so efficiently supported the defenders of the village. The Bavarians, now in conjunction with the left wing of the Saxons, followed the retreating foe,

and succeeded in clearing the outermost houses on the Balan road.

Thus, by 11 a.m., after a struggle of seven hours, unprecedented in the annals of village fighting for its duration, the ferocity with which it was carried on by either side, and the determined intrepidity with which every inch of ground was contested, the village of Bazeilles was captured by the assailants at all points. Capture of Bazeilles, 11 a.m.

The fire which had already broken out in several parts of the village, now gained complete mastery, and the pioneers had to make a road round to the north-east to connect the eastern and western extremities.

The German artillery on the heights upon the left bank of the Givonne had efficiently aided the attack of the infantry during the sanguinary struggle in the village.

The French artillery, which by frequent changes of position had covered the retreat of the Twelfth Corps, disappeared towards noon behind the height (656) between Balan and the Fond de Givonne.

During the operations which have been above set forth, the German troops had become considerably mixed, and, after the capture of Bazeilles, the work of reorganization was at once taken in hand, so as to be in readiness to meet the counter-attack of the enemy, which might be expected at any moment.

*Orders of the Crown Prince of Saxony, 8 a.m.*

The Crown Prince of Saxony had been observing the progress of the action from an early hour from the heights to the south-east of Mairy, and believing that the efforts of the French were being specially directed against the Third Army, he issued orders which would tend to a speedy junction between the latter and his own right wing. Orders of the Crown Prince of Saxony.

According to the communications received from the Third Army, its left wing was supposed to be at Vrine aux Bois. The Crown Prince therefore resolved that, after the capture of the Givonne position, the Guard Corps was to advance up the valley to Fleigneux, and the Twelfth Corps through Illy to the ridge east of St. Menges. Orders having been issued to this effect at 8 a.m., a summons was sent to the First Bavarian Corps, to protect the Army of the Meuse from the side of Sedan in its movement to the right, and to this end to occupy the Bois de la Garenne in good time.

*Engagements of the Guard Corps on the Upper Givonne.*

At 4.30 a.m. the head-quarters of the Guard Corps in Carignan, in agreement with the order of the Crown Prince of Saxony, had sent instructions to the First Division to advance through Pouru aux Bois to Villers Cernay, and for the remainder of the corps to move upon Francheval. As the troops were falling in, the roar of artillery from Bazeilles was heard, and every effort made to expedite the movements. The advanced guard was at once assembled at Villers Cernay, but the main body of the First Infantry Division, owing to the bad state of the roads, did not reach that place until 8 a.m. The portions of the Guard Corps which had originally been directed upon Francheval were also ordered to march on Villers Cernay, owing to the difficulty of crossing the Rulle brook.

Owing to reports from the Twelfth Corps at La Moncelle and Bazeilles, the First Division of the Guard was further ordered to advance with the Corps Artillery from Villers Cernay to Givonne, the Cavalry Division to take post on the right flank of the artillery, and the Second Division to form up temporarily at Villers Cernay.

By 10 a.m. the advanced guard had succeeded, after some sharp skirmishes, in occupying the northern part of the village of Givonne, and the western border of the Villers Cernay copse, the French retiring into the Bois de la Garenne. Meanwhile some companies of the advanced guard had succeeded in establishing themselves on the heights opposite Haybes. Thus, by 10 a.m. the advanced guard covered the front and both flanks of the artillery, which had now come into action at the border of the wood, against the French guns on the heights west of Givonne and Haybes.

Advanced  
guard,  
10 a.m.

Artillery  
of the  
Guard.

At 9 a.m. the main body of the First Division of the Guard, with its Second Brigade in front line, commenced to form up in rear of Villers Cernay copse.

First  
Division  
of Guard  
Corps.

The Corps Artillery, pushing on from Francheval, came into action against the Bois de la Garenne, at a range of three thousand five hundred yards, about 9 a.m. with such effect, that small bodies of French infantry had to be sent forward through the woods to the south of La Chapelle, with the object of annoying the rear of the German batteries. These skirmishers used their rifles with such effect, that some of the guns on the right wing had frequently to show front in that direction.

Corps  
Artillery.

In response to frequent applications from the Twelfth Corps, Prince August of Wurtemberg (commanding Guard Corps) had made arrangements for sending assistance in that direction; but about 9 a.m. an order from the Commander-in-Chief directed the Guard Corps to move upon Fleigneux as soon as the Givonne position was captured. Moreover, from the height (1023) upon which the Corps Artillery was posted, the recently commenced engagement of the Third Army at St Menges could be distinctly seen. As under these circumstances any serious entanglement of the Corps at

Second  
Division  
Guard  
Corps.

Daigny would have upset the plans of the Commander-in-Chief, a few troops only were pushed forward to Daigny, sufficient to check any attempt of the enemy to break out in that direction; and the main body was directed upon Givonne, with the object of ultimately joining hands with the Third Army.

Orders to  
the Guard  
Corps  
between  
10 and  
11 a.m.,  
height  
(1023).

After communicating the instructions necessary for the attainment of his object to the generals assembled on the height (1023), the Prince of Wurtemberg made the following arrangements between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m.:—

The Second Infantry Division of the Guard to advance nearer to Daigny, in support of the Twelfth Corps. The whole of the artillery to deploy on the heights on the left bank of the Givonne, so as to support the Twelfth Corps with its fire and prepare for the intended attack of the infantry upon the opposite bank. The Cavalry Division was meanwhile to open communication with the Third Army in the direction of Illy.

The movements indicated above were carried out with complete success, in spite of obstinate resistance on the part of the French, and a most daring offensive return in the direction of Givonne, and by noon the Germans had succeeded in occupying the whole line of the Givonne, from Bazeilles to above Givonne.

Map 6.

*Deployment of the Third Army to the south, west, and north of Sedan.*

Whilst the Army of the Meuse was thus barring all outlet to the eastward, the troops of the Third Army were gradually drawing the investment closer from other points.

At 7.30 a.m. the King of Prussia reached the height

(956) south of Frénois, from which an excellent view of the field could be obtained.

The Crown Prince had taken up his position at 6 a.m. on the hill north-east of Piaux Croix, but was at first prevented from seeing anything by the thick mist. Towards 7 a.m. the mist lifted, and a splendid view of the entire district to the west and north of Sedan was obtained. The roar of artillery had been heard for some time previously in the direction of Bazeilles, but the low-lying village could not be seen from the Crown Prince's position. From the increasing briskness of the fire in the direction of Bazeilles, it was evident that the First Bavarian Corps must be seriously engaged. In order to support this corps, and prevent the enemy from breaking out to the south, the force originally intended for the heights south of Donchery, consisting of one division of the Second Bavarian Corps with the reserve Movements of the Second Bavarian Corps. artillery, was directed to take up a position between Frénois and Wadelincourt; the other division of this corps being directed to Bazeilles.

On the left wing, the Eleventh and Fifth Army Movements of Eleventh and Fifth Corps. Corps were by this time well beyond Donchery, marching towards the Sedan-Mézières road. On the left the Wurtembergers had crossed the bridge near Dom le Mesnil, with the object of anticipating any attempt on Wurtemberg Division. the part of the enemy to withdraw in that direction. The Fourth Cavalry Division was assembling at Frénois. Fourth Cavalry Division While these movements were taking place under the eyes of the Crown Prince, it was observed that the German cavalry had crossed the Mézières road, and that there was no movement of the enemy in that direction. It was therefore evident that MacMahon either intended to fight at Sedan, or to attempt a withdrawal of his army towards Carignan.

At 7.30 a.m., therefore, the Crown Prince issued

Orders of the Crown Prince, 7.30 a.m. instructions to the Eleventh and Fifth Corps to move round the bend of the Meuse to the northward, and attack the enemy in rear.

*Movements of Second Bavarian Corps.*

Map 1. The Second Bavarian Corps had quitted its camp at Raucourt at 4 a.m., and was directing its march *via* Chémery upon Frénois, when the later orders of the Crown Prince just referred to arrived. General von Hartmann consequently issued instructions in compliance with these orders. By 9 a.m. the artillery reserve completed its deployment on the height (791) east of Frénois. At 10 a.m., by order of the Crown Prince, two batteries of the artillery reserve proceeded along the ridge (574) which stretches from Frénois to La Villette, and unlimbered to the north of the park of Château Bellevue, from which point they took in flank and rear the French artillery deployed between Floing and Illy. The Fourth Bavarian Division, on receiving notice of the change in its destination, consequent on the Crown Prince's orders, had diverted the Seventh Brigade towards Wadelincourt. The village and the height (495) were occupied by 10 a.m.; the former was at once arranged for defence, and the road to Sedan barricaded.

Occupation of Wadelincourt, Frénois, and Torcy. The Eighth Brigade was pushed on to Frénois, and thence some battalions were sent forward to occupy the Torcy railway station, supported by a battery on the hillside to the right of the road. Château Frénois was occupied, and the approaches to Sedan barricaded.

Movements of the Third Division (Bavarian). On the arrival of the Fourth Bavarian Division at Wadelincourt and Frénois, the parts of the Third Division still at the Bois de la Marfée had followed at 10.30 a.m. to the right bank of the Meuse. The Fifth



Brigade, which had advanced to the south of Bazeilles early in the day, had received instructions at 11 a.m. from General von der Tann to move towards Balan and the adjacent heights, so as to bring pressure upon the French right, while the movement of the Army of the Meuse in a northerly direction was being carried out. In carrying out this movement the troops of the Fifth Brigade suffered considerable loss from the fire of the French artillery and infantry.

Balan itself was not occupied, but the enemy offered a stout resistance in the château park, around which a

$\Rightarrow$  4th. Gpr.  
 $\Rightarrow$  3rd Bav. Bde.  
 $\Rightarrow$  3rd Heavy  
 $\Rightarrow$  3rd Light  
 $\Rightarrow$  4th Heavy  
 $\Rightarrow$  4th Light

} VIIth. PRUSSIAN  
DIVISION

*From Balan*

*To La Moncelle*

(635)

$\nmid$  7th. Gpr.  $\nmid$  7th. Gpr.  $\nmid$  6th. Gpr.  $\nmid$  4th. Gpr.  
 1st Bav. Bde. 4th Bav. 3rd Bav. 4th Bav.

$\nmid$  5th. Gpr.  
 3rd Bav. Bde.

brisk struggle soon developed, and it was not until 12.30 a.m. that the French were compelled to entirely evacuate the park. Capture of Balan.

The French troops now retired over the height (656) and into the plantations lying to the north-west; the Bavarians occupied the side of the park which faced towards the enemy, and made the most of such cover as the ground outside afforded, their front towards the north. A brisk stationary action now developed itself at this point; the opportune arrival of the Sixth Brigade,

Arrival of  
the Sixth  
Brigade  
(Bava-  
rian).

which formed up towards 1 p.m. to the north-west of Bazeilles, enabling the more advanced Fifth Brigade to make use of its reserves in the fighting line.

The Eighth Prussian Division had effectively supported the Bavarians in the attack upon Balan, advancing across the Givonne to the north of Bazeilles.

During these movements a powerful force of artillery had been deployed as shown in sketch (page 151).

During the foregoing movements the Saxon troops, which were still in their advanced position to the west of La Moncelle, gradually withdrew and rejoined the Twenty-third Division, with a view to participating in the movement which was now commencing in the direction of Illy.

Advance  
of the  
Fifth and  
Eleventh  
Corps  
through  
St.  
Menges.

The Fifth Corps, advancing through Omicourt, reached the Meuse with its advanced guard at 4 a.m., and crossing the river partly by a field bridge which had meanwhile been constructed, and partly at Donchery, moved forward in the direction of Vivier au Court.

The Eleventh Corps left their bivouacs at 3 a.m., and arriving at Donchery shortly after the passage of the Fifth Corps, crossed the river by the permanent bridge. With the exception of a few detachments which had missed their way in the darkness, and crossed the route of the Fifth Corps, the whole of the Eleventh Corps was at 5.15 a.m. to the north of Donchery, and from thence continued its march in three columns towards the Sedan-Mézières road on the right of the Fifth Corps.

Map 1.

Wurtem-  
berg  
Division.

On the left of the Fifth Corps, the Wurtemberg Division had completed the construction of a bridge near Dom le Mesnil, and pushed forward its Third Brigade to Vivier au Court, where the rest of the division subsequently took up its position facing Mézières. The Second Cavalry Division had proceeded

by way of Vendresse at 5 a.m., to join the Wurtembergers at Dom le Mesnil. Second Cavalry Division.

Just as the advanced guard of the Fifth Corps reached Vivier au Court at 7.30 a.m., and the heads of the Eleventh Corps on its right reached Vrine aux Bois, Briancourt, and Montimont, about the same time, the order from the Crown Prince, directing both corps to move to the right upon St. Menges, was received. Arrival of the Crown Prince's orders, 7.30 a.m.

In order to form a junction with the Meuse Army as speedily as possible, and thus close in the enemy to the north, the march of the Fifth Corps was now directed upon Fleigneux; the advanced guard, in consequence, bent away at once to the right upon Vrine aux Bois. Fifth Corps to Fleigneux.

The Eleventh Corps was directed to pass through the road defile between the Meuse and the Bois de la Falizette, the right column leading, and then to take the direction of St. Menges. Eleventh Corps to St. Menges.

St. Menges was occupied without a struggle by the 87th Regiment, and the greater part of this regiment then took up a position east of the village, facing Illy. A small walled copse on the height (812) east of the Floing road was occupied by one company of the same regiment, while two more companies succeeded about 9 a.m., after a brief skirmish, in occupying the two nearest farms to this village, and soon after forced their way into the north-west portion of it. Occupation of St. Menges.

Meantime three batteries had unlimbered to the north-east of the copse (812) already occupied by the infantry, and engaged the far superior force of French artillery deployed on the ridge between Floing and the Calvaire d'Illy. The position of these three batteries soon became extremely critical; but about 10 a.m. the entire corps artillery of the Eleventh Corps, numbering in all seven batteries, commenced to come into action, and by 11 a.m. these batteries had all come into action. Deployment of corps artillery.

on the left of the three batteries which had first taken up the position.

Four squadrons of cavalry, which had hitherto been under cover in rear of St. Menges, now advanced to Fleigneux, in order to afford a better protection to the batteries in their exposed position. The batteries were further protected by the battalions of the Eleventh Corps, which had now deployed from the road defiles, and were directed partly on Floing and partly on Fleigneux.

The Forty-second Infantry Brigade reached St. Menges with its head at 9 a.m., and took up positions in rear of the left flank of the artillery line on the Fleigneux road, and in the copse (812); the position on the hill north of Floing was reinforced, and a few companies were thrown forward in the direction of Illy in advance of the left flank of the batteries. An advance was made towards Fleigneux, with the object of preparing to meet the attack of the French cavalry which was believed to be impending; two companies were also sent down the hillside, under the enemy's fire from height (853), into the valley below; the skirmishing divisions of these companies had barely reached the Illy-Floing road when they were attacked by the hostile cavalry.

Charge of  
Margueritte's  
Cavalry  
Division.

From the position of Margueritte's Cavalry Division, which was at this time halted in rear of the right wing of the Seventh Corps at Calvaire d'Illy, the deployment of the Prussian batteries had been observed. Three regiments of chasseurs were formed in three lines, and advanced against the two companies just alluded to, the leading regiment wheeled outwards, and swept round the flanks of the skirmishers, followed by the two other regiments. The cavalry were received by a deadly fire from several directions, and especially from the supports on the hillside; the artillery also sent several shells into their midst with fatal effect. The unfortunate chasseurs

were thus compelled to retire into the Bois de la Garenne with heavy loss, and without attaining their object.

Meanwhile the French infantry had occupied the ridge extending from the Calvaire d'Illy to Floing, and by their superior fire forced the weak detachments of Prussian infantry to evacuate the valley and fall towards Fleigneux.

Occupation of the ridge east of Floing by French infantry.

An advance was now made by five companies of the 87th Regiment towards the Givonne valley. These companies, advancing to the height east of Fleigneux at the double, succeeded in capturing about thirty waggons with their teams, which were endeavouring to escape in a northerly direction. These companies then passed to the other side of the copse lying east of the height in order to meet the enemy's cavalry, which, with eight guns, had taken the direction of Olly. The guns had taken up a position in rear of the village, but the cavalry had abandoned their horses and taken to the woods. By a bold dash the guns were captured. Several other detachments of the enemy wandering along the Belgian frontier were met by the advanced guard of the Fifth Army Corps.

During the extension of the infantry of the Eleventh Corps to the Givonne, the artillery line had been lengthened on the left by the batteries of the Fifth Corps, and soon after 11 a.m. ten batteries of the Fifth Corps, in conjunction with fourteen batteries of the Eleventh Corps, formed a powerful line of fire extending from Floing to the Ardennes forest, whilst on the other side of the Givonne the artillery of the Guard Corps were already in action. The cross fire of these two lines of guns was directed principally against the French positions on the Illy plateau, and in the Bois de la Garenne.

Reinforcement of the Prussian artillery.

In order to protect the left flank of the artillery of

the Fifth Corps from the hostile detachments of infantry which were endeavouring to ascend the heights from the Givonne valley to escape in a north-westerly direction, ten squadrons were posted in rear of this flank.

Shortly after the occupation of Olly by the 87th Regiment, some cavalry of the Guard Corps made their appearance at that place, thus establishing connection between the Third Army and the Army of the Meuse.

The two companies of the 87th Regiment which had established themselves in the northern part of Floing, had maintained themselves for two hours against the repeated attacks of the French, until the latter desisted from further offensive movement, and confined themselves to firing upon the entrance to the village from the main position in rear. In spite of this, at 11 p.m., the infantry of the Eleventh Corps succeeded in powerfully reinforcing the two detached companies, and even threatened the French main position to the south.

The French columns moved forward to repel the bold offensive of the Prussians, and succeeded not only in driving back their assailants, but in penetrating nearly to the northern edge of the village. The position of the Prussians in the village became now somewhat critical, but at 12 a.m. two battalions of the Fifth Corps advanced at the double along the western slope of the height (812) towards Floing, while a third battalion reached the western part of the village from the direction of St. Menges. The defenders of the village with the aid of these reinforcements succeeded about 12.30 p.m. in driving out the French, and in taking up a position in front of the south-eastern border of the village.

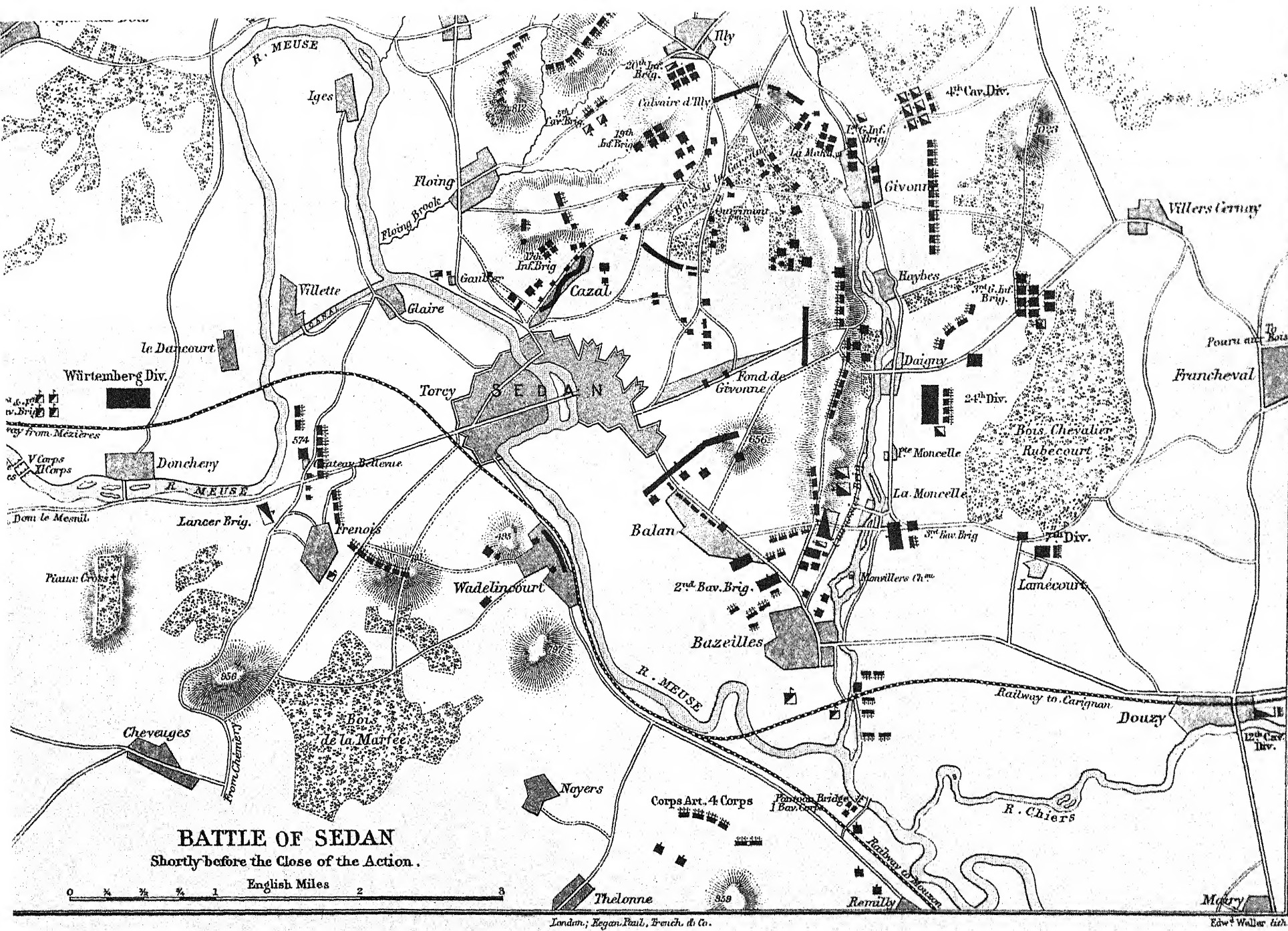
There was now a temporary lull in the action at this point, during which the Prussians reformed their ranks in preparation for a further advance.

Connection established between Third Army and Army of the Meuse.

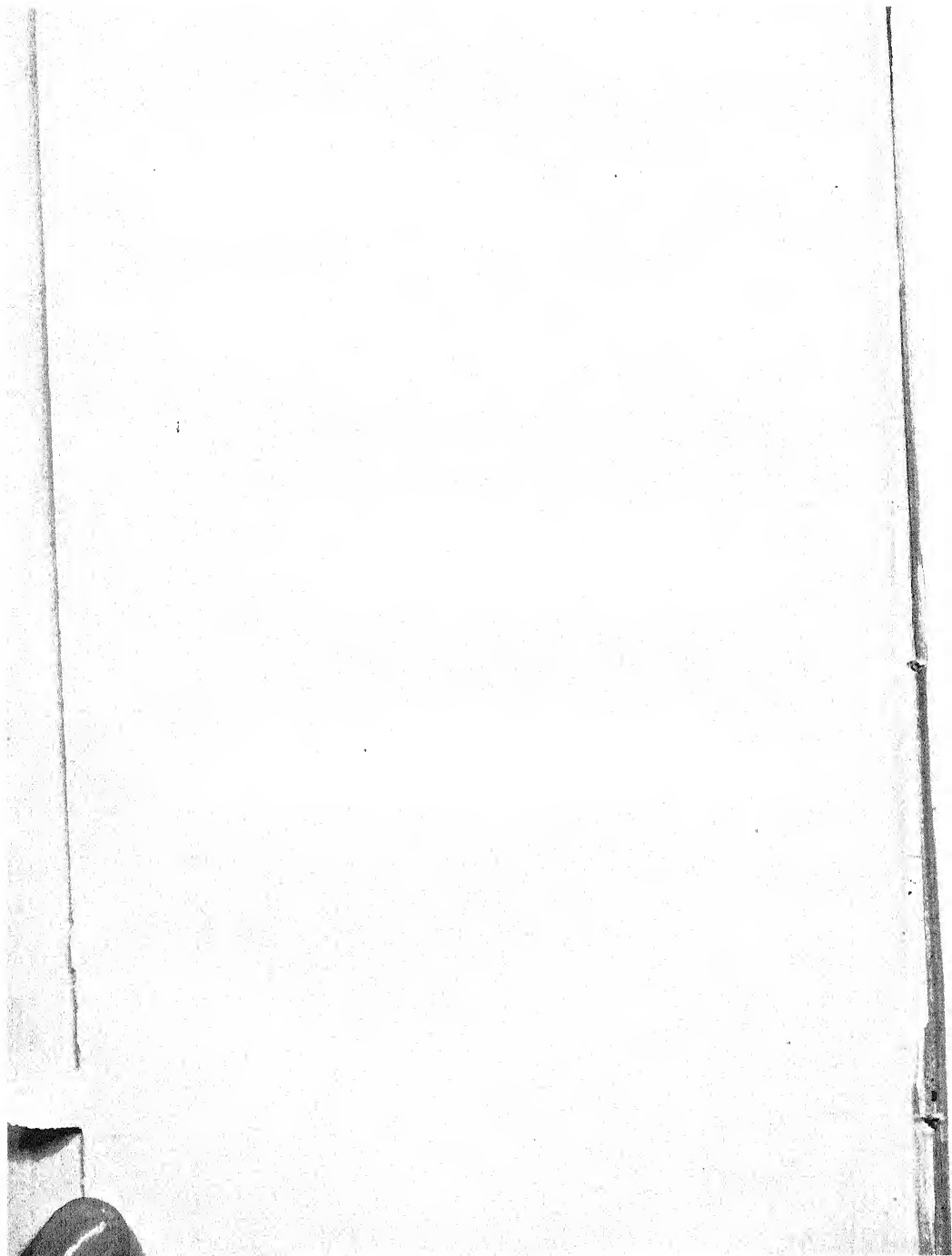
Combat at Floing.











### *Engagements of the Wurtemberg Division.*

The Wurtemberg Division as well as the Fourth and Second Cavalry Divisions, after a series of isolated engagements to the west of Sedan, ultimately formed a general reserve to the left wing of the German line of battle. The Wurtembergers had penetrated during these engagements as far as the vicinity of Mézières, thus preventing the French troops in that part of the theatre from taking any part in the battle.

### *Progress of the Battle after 12 noon.*

The French Commander-in-Chief wishing to inform himself in person of the state of affairs with the Seventh Corps, had proceeded to the north-eastern portion of the field. General Douay, commanding the Seventh Corps, expressed his belief that he could maintain his position, but pointed out the necessity of strongly occupying the Calvaire d'Illy, and the Bois de la Garenne. General Wimpffen accordingly ordered all the troops of the First Corps which could be spared to move off at once to these two points, and then proceeded to the scene of the engagement of the Twelfth Corps.

Engagements on the North front of the French army.

On his arrival there at noon, he found the French troops in full retreat upon Sedan and the Fond de Givonne, while the Germans were in possession of the heights west of La Moncelle, with their left wing already at Balan. The following order was therefore sent to General Douay:—

“The Twelfth Corps is sorely pressed. Send to its support all the troops you can spare.”

General Douay in consequence sent off a brigade of

the Fifth Corps, which had been assigned to him as a reserve; and as the request for help was renewed, he gradually sent off the brigades of Dumont's Division, through the Bois de la Garenne. To replace the latter, Conseil Dumesnil's Division was brought up from the second line to the right wing of the Seventh Corps.

Co-operation of the German artillery.

Whilst the Prussian Corps of the Third Army were deploying, their artillery was involved in a vigorous struggle with the enemy; and by 12 a.m. a line of twenty-six batteries was in action on the north, which, in conjunction with the artillery of the guard on the left bank of the Givonne, produced an overpowering effect. Many of the French guns were dismounted, others deprived of their detachments and teams, while several ammunition waggons were blown into the air.

Capture of Illy.

At 1 p.m. Illy was captured, and an advance made upon the Calvaire d'Illy. During these proceedings the troops which had been despatched to reinforce the Twelfth Corps crossed the divisions of the First Corps in the southern portion of the Bois de la Garenne, marching in the opposite direction towards the Calvaire. At the same time the closely packed masses were overwhelmed by a hail of projectiles from the guns of the Prussian Guard, and broken through by their own cavalry, which had been thrown into disorder by the continuous bursting of shells. Under these critical circumstances, General Douay endeavoured to reoccupy the Calvaire, but all attempts to gain ground beyond this point proved fruitless. A dashing attack was made upon the French defenders of the Calvaire by the cavalry of the Prussian Guard, but after a temporary success it was forced to retire with heavy loss, and reformed behind the batteries of the Fifth Corps. Shortly after the withdrawal of the Prussian cavalry, the French resistance at this point became weaker, and

by 2 p.m. the hill was abandoned. The Prussian infantry immediately occupied the position, and brought their fire to bear upon the northern border of the Bois de la Garenne, and at the same time ten batteries of the Guard Corps from the vicinity of Givonne brought a powerful fire to bear upon the same point; the remaining five batteries of the Guard Corps, together with the two Bavarian batteries and seven Saxon batteries next to them, continued to engage the artillery of the French First Corps, which was deployed to the west of Haybes and Daigny. The artillery position of the Second Bavarian Corps at Frénois had already been reinforced by the order of the Crown Prince, so that by this time (between 2 and 3 p.m.) there were seventy-one batteries in action to the north, east, and south of Sedan, pouring an iron hail into the crowded masses of the French, from which there was no escape. The issue of the battle was in effect decided by the artillery, even without the further advance of the infantry.

Whilst the right wing of the Seventh French Corps had been shattered by the above-mentioned artillery fire, the left wing, in a favourable position on the height north of Cazal, continued to offer an obstinate resistance to the progress of the Prussians at Floing. The Prussians now determined to attack the French position from the rear, as well as the front, and in accordance with this idea a few battalions marched round by the quarries between Floing and Gaulier, and attempted to climb the steep hillside. The French left wing, thus attacked from west and north simultaneously, and overwhelmed by the shells of the Prussian batteries, found itself in such a strait, that the immediate assistance of the cavalry was the only circumstance which could save the hard-pressed infantry from utter disaster. Accordingly, General Margueritte, with his five light

Abandonment of the Calvaire d'Iilly, and consequent movements of the Prussians.

Storming of the ridge S.E. of Floing by the troops of the Eleventh and Fifth Army Corps.

Charge of  
Margue-  
ritte's  
Light  
Division.

regiments and a few detachments, commenced to move across the plateau in a westerly direction. During this movement General Margueritte was mortally wounded, and General Galliflet led the charge against the Prussian infantry.

In spite of the unfavourable character of the ground and the galling fire of the Prussian batteries on their right flank, the French cavalry delivered their charge well home, some squadrons pushing right up to the guns in action at the edge of the heights south of Floing, others penetrating to Gaulier, in rear of the Prussian skirmishing line; but in spite of the most gallant self-devotion, the charge of the French cavalry bore no fruit, beyond creating a temporary check in the advance of the Prussian infantry. A number of more or less isolated combats had ensued upon the charge of the French cavalry, but gradually connected action was resumed, and the broken remnants of the left wing of the Seventh Corps swept back from the plateau south of Floing.

Capture  
of Cazal.

Between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Cazal was captured after a desperate resistance, and the cemetery occupied, and all further resistance on the part of the French in this part of the field practically came to an end. The fire of the French tirailleurs from the glacis of the fortress, however, compelled the occupants of the cemetery to evacuate it, and for the remainder of the day the Prussians contented themselves with maintaining their position from Gaulier to Cazal. Repeated efforts of the French to break out in a northerly direction, were easily checked and repulsed without difficulty.

*Engagements on the East Front of the French Army.*

General Wimpffen having become convinced soon after noon that it was impossible to maintain the

position before Sedan, but believing that he could still open a road to Carignan, by forcing back the now exhausted Bavarians, resolved towards 1 p.m. to attempt to break through the line. With this object the troops of the Twelfth Corps were once more to advance, supported by the available troops of the Fifth Corps; instructions were at the same time sent to the First Corps to make a demonstration from the north upon La Moncelle and Bazeilles, while the Seventh Corps was to cover the rear of these movements.

The orders, however, did not reach their destination until too late, or not at all. Moreover, the greater part of the Twelfth Corps was already in the fortress, and the Seventh Corps, compelled to evacuate the Floing position, was quite unable to undertake the protection of the rear. Owing to these unfavourable circumstances, the intended measures could only be partially carried out.

A series of more or less isolated struggles, maintained with bitter tenacity on either side, now ensued on the east front of the French Army.

The Twelfth Saxon Corps was at this time on its way towards Givonne, marching through Daigny, when the French attack just alluded to was developed, and the German troops were suddenly compelled to form up in defensive array. For some time a series of struggles took place for the possession of the copse west of Daigny and Haybes. Both places were ultimately taken, as well as several prisoners and some guns, and the Germans succeeded in establishing themselves on the crest of the western slope. The French were driven back to Fond de Givonne by a few Saxon companies, but as it was impossible to occupy the extensive village, these companies retired again to the heights.

Establishment of the Forty-fifth Brigade on the heights west of Daigny and Haybes.

As soon as Prince George of Saxony observed that

Situation  
of Saxon  
Corps at  
4 p.m.

the Saxon infantry was firmly established on the heights west of Haybes and Daigny, he ordered the Corps Artillery to advance through La Moncelle to the opposite bank. It deployed accordingly between the batteries of the Twenty-third Division and the Prussian batteries above La Moncelle, so that the ridge from Bazeilles to north-east of Fond de Givonne was now crowned with twenty-one German batteries. No further advance was made in this portion of the field, as it was of no advantage to approach nearer to the guns of the fortress. The remaining portion of the Twelfth Corps also halted, and at 4 p.m. the situation was as follows:—

The Forty-fifth Brigade, eleven batteries, and the 1st Cavalry Regiment on the ridge west of Haybes and Daigny; the Forty-sixth Brigade at Givonne and La Maka; the Twenty-fourth Division near Daigny; Cavalry Division at Douzy.

Engage-  
ment in  
the Bois  
de la  
Garenne.

We have already seen that since noon the attention of the Guard Corps had been seriously directed towards the Bois de la Garenne, and since the evacuation by the French of the Calvaire d'Illy, the Guard Artillery had been almost exclusively directed against the wood and Querimont farm; the latter, lying in the open, was soon set on fire, and before long the French infantry were seen streaming back to Fond de Givonne. At 2.30 p.m. the First Guard Infantry Division advanced through Givonne to the Bois de la Garenne.

A series of struggles now took place in the wood, in the course of which numbers of prisoners were captured. At Querimont farm a most determined stand was made, and it was only after an obstinate and sanguinary conflict that the farm was taken. The Bois de la Garenne was now surrounded from east, north, and west, and after a series of isolated combats, the whole wood at 5 p.m. fell into the hands of the assailants.

Meanwhile, several changes had taken place in the struggle to the south-east of Sedan. The advanced troops of the Fifth Bavarian Brigade had been compelled by the fresh offensive movements on the part of the French to fall back to the interior of the park at Balan. The Sixth Bavarian Brigade having sent forward reinforcements, the French advance at this point was checked, and after an hour's fighting the Bavarians succeeded in recovering their lost ground. Several attempts to drive the enemy further back from his advantageous position failed, and after 3 p.m. the Bavarians limited themselves to a stationary musketry action. This stationary action had lasted for some time, when suddenly swarms of hostile skirmishers appeared in the north-west part of Balan, followed by strong columns from the fortress. The position of the defenders of the village now became critical, and it was only by the opportune arrival of three fresh battalions that they succeeded in holding the park, and the height to the north-east.

General Wimpffen, after giving orders for the forward movement upon Dagny and Haybes, had ridden to the south-east gate of the fortress, where he was met by an order from the Emperor to enter into negotiations with the German Army. The general, however, was unwilling to comply, believing that it was yet possible to cut through the Bavarians and force a passage to Carignan; and, placing himself at the head of some 3000 men, he threw himself into Balan, and completed the success already begun. The Bavarians continued for some time to hold the French in check from a supporting position on the Dagny road, but at 4.30 p.m. a general retreat was commenced to Bazeilles. The Bavarian artillery, assisted by the Corps Artillery of the Fourth Corps, now commenced

Attacks  
of the  
French  
upon  
Balan and  
Bazeilles.



to pour shell into Balan from the east and south, and fresh troops coming up succeeded in stopping the advance of the French at the eastern issue of Balan.

Expected  
sortie of  
French at  
Balan, and  
conse-  
quent  
measures  
of the  
Germans.

The unexpected advance of the French on this part of the field had led the Germans to apprehend a sortie in force along the Carignan road. General von der Tann therefore, at 5 p.m., led forward his Second Brigade through Bazeilles, and ordered the Third to hold itself in readiness at La Moncelle; five regiments of cavalry also assembled to the west of this village. The Sixteenth Infantry Brigade of the Fourth Corps was brought forward to a position in rear of the Bavarian batteries on the heights north of Bazeilles, whilst the Twelfth Corps formed a reserve in the neighbourhood of La Moncelle.

Retreat  
of the  
French.

These measures, however, had not been completed, when the French Commander-in-Chief, seeing that his troops were rapidly melting away under the annihilating artillery fire of the enemy, and having received a second order from the Emperor, reluctantly gave orders for retreat.

General von der Tann, observing that the musketry fire of the French was visibly diminishing, ordered the artillery to cease firing and the infantry to advance towards the village, which was shortly afterwards completely occupied without much further resistance.

Immediately after the occupation of Balan in the manner described, the white flag was observed fluttering in the breeze over the gate of the fortress.

Final  
attempt  
of the  
French  
to break  
through.

After all fire had ceased, two desperate attempts to break through were made—one by the artillery advancing eastward from the Fond de Givonne; the other by the second squadron of the 1st Curassiers towards Cazal. Both attempts, however, were in vain.

From the height (956) south of Frénois, the King of

Prussia, having perceived that further resistance on the part of the French was hopeless, and wishing to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, gave orders at 4 p.m. for the whole available artillery on the left bank of the Meuse to concentrate its fire on Sedan. Shortly after the bombardment had been commenced, flames rose high in several places over the beleaguered town and fortress, and without further struggle the place capitulated.

Negotiations were entered upon immediately, meanwhile the German Army bivouaced as follows :—First Bavarian Corps at Bazeilles and La Moncelle ; Third Bavarian Division between Bazeilles and Balan, west of the high-road ; Fourth Corps on Bazeilles-Douzy road ; Twenty-fourth Saxon Division south-east of Dagny ; Twenty-third Saxon Division east of Givonne ; Saxon Corps Artillery at Villers Cernay, and Cavalry Division at Douzy. First Guard Infantry Division north-west of Givonne ; Second Guard Infantry Division east of Givonne ; Guard Corps Artillery and Cavalry Division on the Calvaire and to the south of Illy ; Fourth Cavalry Division on the road from Givonne to Bouillon.

The result of the negotiations was that at 11 a.m. on the next day, 2nd of September, at the Château Bellevue, the following agreement was signed by the Emperor Napoleon :—

The French army were declared prisoners of war ; but in acknowledgment of the brave defence, exception was made in favour of the officers. They were to retain their swords and other personal property, on the understanding that they would bind themselves, upon their written word of honour, neither to fight against Germany until the termination of the war, nor to take active part against her in any other way. Those officers who were disinclined to give this promise, and all the men, were to be formed by regiments and brought as prisoners of war, by

the 3rd of September at the latest, to the peninsula washed by the Meuse, north-west of the fortress, there to be handed over to the German agents at Iges. The medical officers alone to remain with the wounded. All the stores of the army in arms and guns, eagles and colours, horses and carriages, military chests and ammunition, were to be delivered over at once; the fortress of Sedan in its present state by the evening of the 2nd of September at latest.

#### Losses.

The German Army had lost in this battle about 400 officers and 8500 men killed and wounded. On the French side the losses were—

In battle	{ Killed...	...	..	3,000
	{ Wounded	...	...	14,000
	{ Prisoners	...	...	21,000
Prisoners of War at Capitulation				83,000
Disarmed in Belgium				3,000
Total				124,000 men.

In addition to the foregoing—

419 Field guns and mitrailleuses.

139 Garrison guns.

1072 Carriages.

66,000 Rifles.

6,000 Serviceable horses.

Of the combatant forces which had recently been organized at Paris and Chalons, only the Thirteenth Corps was now in the field.

#### Summary.

The ten days' campaign against the Army of Chalons which terminated in the crushing defeat of Sedan, forms one of the most memorable phases of the Franco-German war, both from the peculiarity of the strategical conditions, and the magnitude of the tactical success achieved by the German arms. The successes achieved in the first

collisions with the French, and the three battles round Metz had certainly led to most important results, inasmuch as a considerable part of the French Army had been shut up in the fortress of Metz, while the remainder had been thrown back in disorder upon Chalons. But all this was nothing compared with the results of the day of Sedan, which struck out at one blow 124,000 men from the *personnel* of the French Army, delivered into the hands of the invader a fortress of the first importance, together with its supplies, etc., and lastly, set free a force of over 200,000 Germans for the subsequent operations. The political consequences of the victory of Sedan need not be discussed here; suffice it to say, that with the fall of Sedan the Napoleonic dynasty crumbled into the dust, and from its ashes arose the French Republic of to-day.

### *Comments.*

The complete envelopment of the French Army at Sedan forms one of the most characteristic and striking features of the battle. Conceived originally with the idea of intercepting the French retreat to Mezières, on the west, and equally to prevent any attempt to break out towards Carignan and join Bazaine's army, on the east; the plan of the King of Prussia gradually developed as the day wore on, into a complete investing circle being drawn round the French Army, which was gradually closed in, until all possibility of escape became hopeless, and the issue of the day was decided by the masterly combination of strategy and tactics which placed the various units of the two German armies, with unerring accuracy, upon the ground where each could act with the greatest possible effect, conjointly with troops of the other arms acting in concert, to forward the success of the general plan of operations.

Envelopment of the French Army by the Third and Fourth German Armies.

Use of the  
German  
artillery.

The German artillery in the battle of Sedan produced an exceptionally grand and decisive effect. Inserting themselves in the columns of route in positions favourable to early deployment, the batteries hastened forward to the battle-field with the most advanced parties of infantry. As a general rule the infantry attack was deferred until the artillery had produced its full effect, the Calvaire d'Illy being a remarkable instance of the enemy being completely driven from his position by the artillery fire *before* the infantry advanced to the attack.

Cavalry.

The German cavalry, upon whose clear and trustworthy reports the decisive resolutions of the royal head-quarters were based, was held in readiness for well-timed employment during the whole battle. The course of the struggle in this battle, however, did not call upon it to play a leading part, as was the case at the battle of Mars-la-Tour.

The French cavalry, on the other hand, was used on the northern front of the field with considerable boldness and vigour, the charges being bravely pushed home, but without achieving any notable result. It is worthy of remark that these charges were sustained by the German infantry for the most part in *loose formations*.

Advanced  
posts.

The battle of Sedan offers several instances of isolated positions being taken by a bold dash on the part of the most advanced German troops; these positions being held with the greatest tenacity, in spite of determined counter-attacks on the part of the French in superior numbers, until reinforcements could arrive. A noteworthy instance of this occurred when the advanced troops of the Twelfth Corps seized the village of La Moncelle and occupied the two houses on the slope to the west of the village, close to the Balan road.\*

These two detached houses were held for a very considerable time by weak detachments, in spite of the furious onslaughts of the French and their counter-attack on La Moncelle. The Germans thus secured a valuable *point d'appui*, actually *in rear of the enemy's fighting line*.

The battle of Sedan presents us with one of the most remarkable instances of village fighting in the annals of war; the conflict which raged at Bazeilles from 4.15 a.m. to 11 a.m. being, for bitterness, duration, and loss of life on both sides, without a parallel in history. The gallant defence of the French at this point and their subsequent stubborn resistance at Balan, which may be looked upon as the second line of defence for the Bazeilles position, kept the Bavarians at bay throughout the battle, even after the white flag had been hoisted in token of surrender over the fortress. How dearly the Bavarians paid for every step gained on the Bazeilles-Balan road may be estimated from the fact that the losses sustained in this part of the field alone, were nearly equal to those in the whole of the rest of the field put together. Here alone could the French claim to be still undefeated at the close of the action; and the extensive preparations made by the Germans to resist the expected sortie in force along the Balan-Bazeilles road bear evidence how little secure they were even then, in the position which they had wrested from the French at the cost of so many valuable lives. The little inn at Bazeilles, aptly called "*Au-dernière cartouche*," bears melancholy testimony even now, to the desperate fighting which raged for so many hours around it.

## FRANCO-GERMAN WAR, 1870-71.

## FRENCH ARMY.

Squadron = 125 men; Battalion = 700 men; Battery = 6 guns.

*At Full Strength.*—220 Squadrons at 150 = 33,000 Cavalry; 332 Battalions at 800 = 265,600 Infantry.

Total, 298,600; 780 Guns; 144 Mitrailleuses.

	Commanders.	Cavalry Divisions.	Infantry Divisions.	Total Number.			
				Cavalry.	Infantry.	Guns.	Mitrailleuses.
Concentrated in vicinity of Metz	Imperial Guard	1	2	3,000	16,800	60	12
	Second Corps	1	3	2,000	27,300	72	18
	Third Corps	1	4	3,500	36,400	96	24
	Fourth Corps	1	3	2,000	27,300	72	18
In and to the east of the Vosges		4	12	10,500	107,800	300	72
	General Bourbaki	1	4	3,500	36,400	96	24
	General Frossard	1	3	2,000	27,300	72	18
	General de Failly	1	3	2,500	26,600	72	18
At Chalons	General Felix Douay	3	10	8,000	90,300	240	60
	Marshal Canrobert	1	4	3,000	34,300	114	6
Cavalry Reserve Artillery Reserve...	General de Barrail	3	—	6,000	—	30	6
	General Bonnemain	—	—	—	—	96	—
	General de Forton	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Grand Total	11	26	27,500	232,400	780	144

## FRANCO-GERMAN WAR, 1870-71.

## GERMAN ARMY, 1ST OF AUGUST.

	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Guns.
First Army ... ..	50,000	4,800	180
Second Army ... ..	156,000	22,000	546
Third Army ... ..	126,700	15,300	480
Total ... ..	332,700	42,100	1,206
First Corps ... ..	25,000	1,200	84
First Cavalry Division ... ..		3,600	6
Second Corps ... ..	25,000	1,200	84
Sixth Corps... ..	25,000	1,200	84
Second Cavalry Division ... ..		3,600	12
Total ... ..	407,700	52,900	1,476
Seventeenth Division (including Seventeenth Cavalry Brigade ... ..	13,000	1,800	36
Total ... ..	420,700	54,700	1,512

## GERMAN FIELD ARMY. (OFFICIAL ACCOUNT, PAGE 45.)

	Infantry.	Cavalry.	Guns.
Germany ... ..	385,600	48,000	1,284
Bavaria ... ..	50,000	5,500	192
Wurtemberg ... ..	15,000	1,500	54
Baden ... ..	11,700	1,800	54
Total ... ..	462,300	56,800	1,584
{ Deduct 52 Landwehr Battalions (800) ,, 16 Reserve Squadrons (120) ,, 6 Reserve Batteries (6) ... }	41,600	1,920	72
	420,700	54,880	1,512



# FRANCO-GERMAN WAR, 1870-71.

## GERMAN ARMIES.

Battalion = 1000 men ; Squadron = 150 men ; Battery = 6 guns.

FIRST ARMY (GENERAL VON STEINMETZ).		District.	Commanders.	Battalions.	Squadrons.	Batteries.	Guns.
First Formation	Seventh Army Corps	Westphalia .....	Von Zastrow .....	25	8	14	84
Additions.....	Eighth " "	Rhine Provinces .....	Von Goeben .....	25	8	15	90
	Third Cavalry Division	" " " " " "	Count von der Gröben .....	—	16	1	6
	First Army Corps	Prussia Proper .....	Baron von Manteuffel .....	25	8	14	84
	First Cavalry Division	" " " " " "	Von Hartmann .....	—	24	1	6
Total, 9,600 Cavalry ; 75,000 Infantry ; 270 Guns.							
SECOND ARMY (PRINCE FREDERICK CHARLES OF PRUSSIA).							
First Formation	{ Guard Corps (including) Third Cavalry Division }	.....	Prince Augustus of Wurtemberg	29	32	15	90
Additions.....	Fourth " "	Brandenburg .....	Von Alvensleben II. ....	25	8	14	84
	Tenth " "	Prussian Saxony .....	Von Alvensleben I. ....	25	8	14	84
	Fifth Cavalry Division	Hanover .....	Von Voigts-Khetz .....	25	8	14	84
	Sixth " "	.....	Von Rheinbaben .....	—	36	2	12
	Ninth Army Corps ...	.....	{ Duke William of Mecklenburg }	—	20	1	6
	Twelfth " "	Schleswig-Holstein ..	Von Manstein .....	23	12	15	90
	{ Twelfth (Saxon) Cavalry Division .....	Saxony .....	The Crown Prince of Saxony ...	29	8	15	90
	Second Army Corps...	.....	Count L. Lippe.....	—	16	1	6
		Pomerania .....	Von Franzecky .....	25	8	14	84
				181	156	105	630
Total, 23,400 Cavalry ; 181,000 Infantry ; 630 Guns.							

## THIRD ARMY (THE CROWN PRINCE OF PRUSSIA).

First Formation	Fifth Army Corps..... Eleventh Army Corps First Bavarian Corps Second " " { Baden Division ..... (Battalion 900 strong) Württemberg Division Fourth Cavalry Division Sixth Army Corps..... Second Cavalry Division	Posen ..... Hesse, etc. .... ..... ..... ..... ..... Silesia ..... .....	Von Kirchbach ..... Von Bose ..... Von der Tann Rathsamhausen Von Hartmann ..... Von Beyer ..... Von Oberritz..... Prince Albrecht of Prussia ..... Von Tümping ..... Count von Stolberg-Wernigerode	25 25 25 25 13 15 — 25 —	8 8 20 20 12 10 24 8 24	14 14 16 16 9 9 2 14 2	84 84 96 96 54 54 12 84 12
Additions.....				153	134	96	576

Total, 20,100 Cavalry; 151,700 Infantry; 576 Guns.

Grand Total in round numbers, 53,000 Cavalry; 408,000 Infantry; 1,500 Guns.

## FIRST FORMATION.

FIRST ARMY.—Seventh and Eighth Corps and Third Cavalry Division ... 4,800 Cavalry; 59,000 Infantry; 180 Guns.

SECOND ARMY.—{ Guards, Third, Fourth, and Tenth Corps, and Fifth and Sixth }  
Cavalry Divisions ... 16,800 " 104,000 " 360 "THIRD ARMY.—{ Fifth, Eleventh, First and Second Bavarian Corps, Wurtemberg }  
and Baden Divisions, Fourth Cavalry Division 15,300 " 126,700 " 480 "

RESERVE.—Ninth and Twelfth Corps ... 5,400 " 52,000 " 186 "

SUBSEQUENT REINFORCEMENTS.—{ First, Second, and Sixth Corps, First and }  
Second Cavalry Divisions ... 10,800 " 75,000 " 270 "

SUBSEQUENT REINFORCEMENTS.—Seventeenth Division (including Cavalry Brigade) 1,800 " 13,000 " 36 "

## FRANCO-GERMAN WAR, 1870-71.

## ORGANIZATION.

INFANTRY.		<i>French.</i>		<i>German.</i>	
Company	...	...	133	...	250.
Battalion	...	6 Companies =	800	4 Companies =	1000.
Regiment	...	3 Battalions	...	3 Battalions.	
Brigade	...	2 Regiments	...	2 Regiments.	

## INFANTRY DIVISION.

Infantry	...	2 Brigades (to one of which a Battalion of Chasseurs is attached)	2 Brigades.
Artillery	...	3 Batteries (including one of Mitrailieuses)	4 Batteries.
Cavalry	...	...	1 Regiment.
Engineers	...	1 Company	1 Company (Pioneers).

## ARMY CORPS.

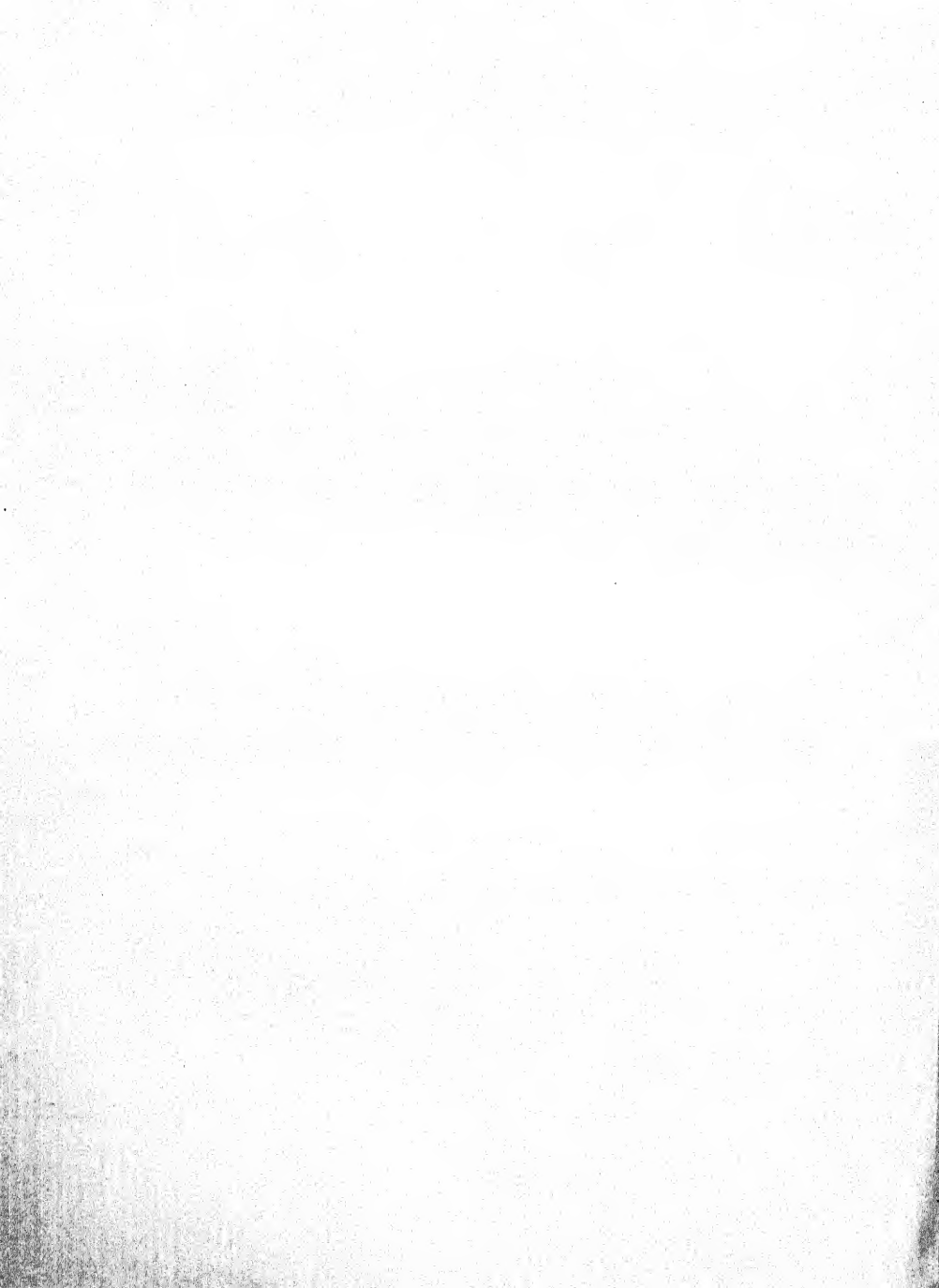
Infantry Division, as above	{	2, 3, or 4	...	{	2, with 1 Jager Battalion.
Cavalry	...	1 Division	...		2 Regiments.
Artillery	...	6 to 8 Batteries			6 to 7 Batteries.
Engineers	...	1 Company	...		1 Company (Pioneers).

## ARMY.

*French.*  
 8 Army Corps.  
 3 Reserve Cavalry Divisions.  
 1 Artillery Reserve, 16 Batteries.  
 3 Companies Engineers.

<i>German.</i>					
1st Army, with	3 Corps and	2 Cavalry Divisions			
2nd "	"	7	"	2	"
3rd "	"	6	"	2	"
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
		16		6	

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